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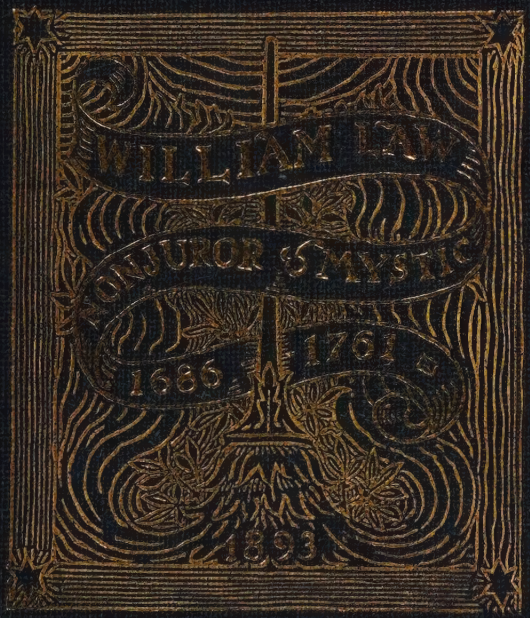

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CHARACTERS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF WILLIAM LAW

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CHARACTERS

AND CHARACTERISTICS OF

WILLIAM LAW

NONJUROR AND MYSTIC

SELECTED AND ARRANGED

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

ALEXANDER WHYTE, D.D.

OF ST. GEORGE'S FREE CHURCH

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PREFACE

THIS is not the first time that the idea of a volume like the present has entered the minds of some of William Law's admirers. John Sterling, writing in 1843 to Professor Maurice, his brother-in-law, enthusiastically announces his discovery of one of Law's earliest philosophical Essays, and suggests to Maurice that he should see to its being reprinted for the sake of his students and other thoughtful young men. In a subsequent letter Sterling puts forward the idea that a volume might be made out of Law somewhat similar to Coleridge's well-known volume, the *Aids to Reflection*. And though, unhappily, the larger undertaking was never carried out, yet the Essay referred to,—the *Remarks on the Fable of the Bees*,—was republished by the Messrs. Macmillan in 1844, with a singularly characteristic Introduction by Professor Maurice, a piece of work that will make all who read it greatly regret that its able and versatile author did not go on to render in our day the same service to William Law that Coleridge had rendered to Archbishop Leighton. I need not say that it never entered my head to attempt the task that Sterling had in vain called upon Maurice to undertake. As it is, I have often felt that I have been almost too bold even to make bare

extracts out of an author concerning whom Maurice homologates the saying of another literary friend of his to the effect that Law is the most *continuous* writer in the English language. At the same time, what I have ventured to do in this volume I have done with immense enjoyment and advantage to myself. The study of this quite incomparable writer has been nothing less than an epoch in my life.

The Introductory Lecture stands very much as it was delivered at the opening of my classes for the study of Law this winter.

The Rules and Prayers on pp. 311-328 are from Christopher Walton's *Notes and Memorials for a Biography of William Law.* (Printed for private circulation. London, 1854.)

A. W.

St. George's Free Church, Edinburgh,
3rd December 1892.

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A CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF THE WORKS OF WILLIAM LAW

[The Editions referred to in the present volume are mentioned within brackets]

The Bishop of Bangor's late Sermon, and his Letter to Dr. Snape in Defence of it, answered. And the Dangerous Nature of some Doctrines in his Preservative. *Set forth in a Letter to his Lordship.* By William Law, M.A. London, 1717.

A Second Letter to the Bishop of Bangor; wherein his Lordship's Notions of Benediction, Absolution, and Church-Communion, are proved to be Destructive of every Institution of the Christian Religion. To which is added a Postscript in answer to the Objections that have been made against his former Letter. By William Law, M.A. London, 1717.

A Reply to the Bishop of Bangor's Answer to the Representation of the Committee of Convocation. Humbly addressed to his Lordship. By William Law, M.A. London, 1719.

[*Three Letters to the Bishop of Bangor.* Ninth Edition. London, 1753.]

Remarks upon a late Book entituled, The Fable of the Bees, or, Private Vices, Publick Benefits. *In a Letter to the Author.* By William Law, M.A. London, 1723. [Third Edition. London, 1762.]

The Absolute Unlawfulness of the Stage Entertainment fully Demonstrated. By William Law, A.M. London, 1726. [Sixth Edition. London, 1773.]

A Practical Treatise upon Christian Perfection. By William Law, A.M. London, 1726. [Fifth Edition. London, 1759.]

A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life, adapted to the State and Condition of all Orders of Christians. By William Law, A.M. London, 1729. Second Edition, corrected. London, 1732. [Tenth Edition. London, 1772.]

The Case of Reason, or Natural Religion, Fairly and Fully Stated, in Answer to a Book intitled, Christianity as Old as the Creation. By William Law, M.A. London, 1732. [Third Edition, revised and corrected. London, 1774.]

A Demonstration of the Gross and Fundamental Errors of a Late Book [by Bishop Hoadly?] *called,* A Plain Account of the Nature and End of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, etc. *Wherein also the Nature and Extent of the Redemption of all Mankind by Jesus Christ is stated and explained; and the Pretences of the Deists for a Religion of Natural Reason instead of it are examined to the Bottom. The whole humbly, earnestly, and affectionately addressed to all Orders of Men, and more especially to all the Younger Clergy.* By William Law, A.M. London, 1737. Third Edition, corrected. London, 1752. [Fourth Edition. London, 1769.]

The Grounds and Reasons of Christian Regeneration, or, The New Birth, offered to the consideration of Christians and Deists By William Law, M.A. London, 1739. [Seventh Edition. London, 1773.]

An Earnest and Serious Answer to Dr. Trapp's Discourse of the Folly, Sin, and Danger of being Righteous Over-much. By William Law, M.A. London, 1740. [Fourth Edition. London, 1772.]

An Appeal to all that Doubt or Disbelieve the Truths of the Gospel, whether they be Deists, Arians, Socinians, or Nominal Christians; in which the True Grounds and Reasons of the whole Christian Faith and Life are plainly and fully Demonstrated. To which are added some animadversions on Dr. Trapp's late Reply. By William Law, M.A. London, 1740. [Third Edition. London, 1768.]

The Spirit of Prayer: or, the Soul Rising out of the Vanity of Time into the Riches of Eternity. By William Law, M.A. London, 1749. [Seventh Edition. London, 1773.]

The Second Part of The Spirit of Prayer: or, the Soul Rising out of the Vanity of Time into the Riches of Eternity. In several Dialogues between Academicus, Rusticus, and Theophilus. At which Humanus was present. By William Law, M.A. London, 1750. [Fifth Edition. London, 1770.]

The Way to Divine Knowledge: being several Dialogues between Humanus, Academicus, Rusticus, and Theophilus, as preparatory to a New Edition of the Works of Jacob Behmen and the Right Use of them. By William Law, A.M. London, 1752. [Second Edition. London, 1762.]

The Spirit of Love, being an Appendix to the Spirit of Prayer. In a Letter to a Friend. By William Law, A.M. London, 1752. [Third Edition. London, 1766.]

The Second Part of The Spirit of Love. In Dialogues. By William Law, A.M. London, 1754. [Second Edition. London, 1765.]

A Short but Sufficient Confutation of the Rev. Dr. Warburton's Projected Defence (as he calls it) of Christianity in his Divine Legation of Moses. *In a Letter to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of London.* By William Law, A.M. London, 1757. [Second Edition. London, 1769.]

Of Justification by Faith and Works: a Dialogue between a Methodist and a Churchman. By William Law, M.A. London, 1760.

A Collection of Letters on the Most Interesting and Important Subjects, and on Several Occasions. By William Law, M.A. London, 1760. [Second Edition. London, 1769.]

An Humble, Earnest, and Affectionate Address to the Clergy. By William Law, M.A. London, 1761. [Third Edition. London, 1774.]

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE

WILLIAM LAW

AN INTRODUCTORY LECTURE

WILLIAM LAW was born at King's Cliffe, Northamptonshire, in 1686, and he died at the same place in 1761. Daniel Defoe was born in 1661, Jonathan Swift in 1667, Joseph Addison in 1672, Alexander Pope in 1688, Joseph Butler in 1692, John Wesley in 1703, Samuel Johnson in 1709, and Oliver Goldsmith in 1728. The best books of Law's famous contemporaries are all more or less known to every one who loves books,—Crusoe and Gulliver, Homer and the Essay on Man, the Spectator, the Tatler, the Vicar of Wakefield, the Analogy and the Sermons, as well as Southey and Boswell,—but many not ill-read men have never read a single line of William Law. And yet it may with perfect safety be said that there are very few authors in English literature, if there is one, whose works will better delight and reward readers of an original and serious cast of mind than just the wholly forgotten works of William Law. In sheer intellectual strength Law is fully abreast of the very foremost of his illustrious contemporaries, while in that fertilising touch which is the true test of genius, Law simply stands alone. And then his truly great and sanctified intellect worked exclusively, intensely, and with unparalleled originality on the most interesting, the most important, and the most productive of all subjects, the Divine nature and human nature, sin, prayer, love, and eternal life. Certainly fame is like a river that beareth up things light and swollen, and drowns things weighty and solid.

BIRTH AND COLLEGE DAYS

William Law was the fourth of a large family of eight sons and three daughters. His father was a shopkeeper in King's Cliffe, and the shop had prospered in his honest and attentive hands. The old shopkeeper's impressive portrait has been preserved to us in the delightful gallery of his son's *Serious Call.* He was surely a happy son who could draw such a portrait of his father as we have in the Paternus of that noble book and could also place beside it such a companion picture as that of Eusebia in her widowhood. Young Law was intended for the ministry of the Church of England, and with that view he entered Emmanuel College, Cambridge, in 1705. He was elected to a Fellowship and entered Holy Orders in 1711. He held his Fellowship till 1716, when by his refusal to take the oath of allegiance to King George I., Law forfeited his Fellowship and with it all hope of preferment in the Established Church. I suppose every student lays down rules for his life when he first leaves his father's house and enters the university, and much more when he enters the divinity hall; and the only thing remarkable about the rules that Law laid down for his conduct as a student is the light they cast on the early life of the future author of the *Christian Perfection* and the *Serious Call.* Out of Law's eighteen rules I select the following as specimens. 'That the greatness of human nature consists in nothing else but in imitating the Divine nature. To avoid all idleness. To avoid all excess in eating and drinking. To call to mind the presence of God whenever I find myself under any temptation to sin, and to have immediate recourse to prayer. To think humbly of myself and to think with great charity of all others. To forbear all evil-speaking. To pray privately three times a day besides my morning and evening devotions. To spend some time in giving an account of the day, previous to evening prayer.' To the students of William Law's works all these rules and resolutions read like so many headings of well-known chapters and recall many never-to-be-forgotten passages. The letter which the young nonjuror wrote to his eldest brother when he lost his Fellowship, and with it all the high hopes his family had hitherto held of his advancement in the Church, lets us see what kind of man the observance of his rules of conduct had produced in William Law. 'Dear Brother,'

he wrote, 'I have sent my mother such news as I am afraid she will be too much concerned at, which is the only trouble I have for what I have done. My prospect is melancholy enough, but had I done what was required of me to avoid it, I should have thought my condition much worse. The benefits of my education seem partly at an end, but that education had been miserably lost if I had not learned to fear something more than misfortune. . . . I expected to have had a greater share of worldly advantages than I am now likely to enjoy, but I am fully persuaded that if I am not happier for this trial it will be my own fault. . . . I am heartily glad that your education does not expose you to the same hardships that mine does me, so that you may provide for your family without the expense of conscience. . . . I shall conclude as I began with desiring you to say as many comfortable things as you can to my mother, which will much oblige your affectionate brother.'

AS A CONTROVERSIALIST

While yet a young man, Law sprang to the front rank of the polemical writers of his day. The Bangorian controversy created a tremendous uproar in the Church of England in Law's early days. We have ourselves passed through insane enough panics to have some idea of the Bangorian controversy. Dr. Hoadly, Bishop of Bangor, occupied, roughly speaking, some such position theologically and ecclesiastically in his day as that which Bishop Hampden, Archbishop Whately, Dean Stanley, and Dr. Hatch occupied in the Church of England in their day. The memorable sermon that Bishop Hoadly preached before George I. in 1717, and which caused such a scandal, was just such a sermon as Dean Stanley, say, might have preached in his day, and, indeed, did often preach. And it will give modern students not a bad idea of Law's reply to Hoadly if they will imagine Canon Mozley replying in a pamphlet to Dean Stanley's *Church Institutions*. Mozley at his best is not unlike Law if only he had a dash of Newman to give lucidity, keenness, flexibility, and here and there a subtle touch of wit and satire to his style. The High Church party of that day were soon in ecstasies over the advent of such a powerful writer on their side.

AGAINST HOADLY

And I do not wonder at their exhilaration. For, little sympathy as I have with many of Law's early ecclesiastical contentions,—as little as he latterly had himself,—yet I cannot but confess to the strength of understanding, the ripeness of learning, the clearness of eye, and, withal, the noble seriousness of mind that Law discovers to his readers on his first appearance in the arena of theological controversy. Throughout his three letters to Hoadly, Law is almost wholly taken up with the divine right of kings and priests, the apostolical succession of English bishops, baptismal regeneration, confirmation, absolution, and suchlike questions. There are not lacking, indeed, many promises and foretastes of that truly catholic breadth and depth of mind, and that truly apostolic power of handling divine things, which afterwards made William Law so deservedly famous. But had he not in after days far outgrown the Bangorian stage of his mental and spiritual development, Law would have been hailed as the ablest and freshest polemical writer of his own day, but would never have been opened after his own day had passed away. No one can read Law's *Three Letters to the Bishop of Bangor* without admiring and enjoying the young nonjuror's ecclesiastical gladiatorship, but it is when he rises into such passages as those on prayer, on the use of the passions in religion, and suchlike, that we hail the approach of the coming author of the *Christian Perfection*, the *Serious Call*, and *The Spirit of Love*. In their purely theological passages Law's *Three Letters* continually remind me of Hooker at his best. It is the fashion to laugh at Christopher Walton as a perfect madcap on the subject of William Law and all that he ever said and did, but I have found nothing that to my mind better sums up the true merit of Law in the part he took in the Bangorian controversy than just what Walton says on this subject in his mammoth footnote. 'If the reader,' says Walton, 'be a person of experience, strict impartiality, and solid judgment in religious things, he will easily arrive at a clear perception of the true and the false of all the questions discussed in this most important controversy. For our author, despite his captivating logic, rhetoric, and erudition, and notwithstanding the praise bestowed upon those letters by the High Church party and their reviewers, must not be sanctioned

beyond the bounds of justice and experience.' With that wise caution taken along with a sentence out of Bishop Ewing's well-written eulogy I shall take leave of Law's first publication. 'The *Letters* to Hoadly,' says the Bishop of Argyll and the Isles, 'may fairly be put on a level with the *Lettres Provinciales* of Blaise Pascal, both displaying equal power, wit, and learning.'

We do not even know where Law was living during the years that immediately followed his exclusion from college life, but that he was not idle we soon have abundant proof. In the year 1705, Dr. Bernard Mandeville published a short political squib of some two hundred doggerel lines entitled *The Grumbling Hive*, which he followed up with a succession of defences and expansions of his doctrines, publishing the whole under the general title of *The Fable of the Bees* in 1723. Under the figure of a bee-hive, in which 'These insects lived like men and all Our actions they performed in small,' Mandeville took up the cynical position that our vilest and most diabolical vices are not only natural to us but are actually necessary to fit us for our life in this world; and, indeed, that the most prosperous communities of men owe all their prosperity at bottom to the vicious dispositions of their individual members. In Mandeville's own words, his book was written to show that it is the very vileness of the ingredients that secures the wholesomeness of every well-ordered society, and to extol the wisdom of statesmen and philosophers who have raised such a beautiful machine as a great nation is out of such contemptible and abominable materials. Nor is Mandeville, in all this, setting forth a violent paradox wherewith to bait the moralists and divines of his day, as you would naturally think. Not at all. With all his ability and learning and argumentative powers, and they are not small, and with something that looks sometimes like real conviction, the author of *The Fable of the Bees* defends and extends his scornful position through two large volumes. Mandeville's contemptuous and insulting book called forth many able and indignant replies, but William Law's reply is on all hands admitted to be by far the best. In a letter to his brother-in-law, Frederick Denison Maurice, we find John Sterling expressing himself about Law's answer to Mandeville in this manner: 'I cannot refrain

AGAINST MANDEVILLE

from sending you a few words to announce a discovery which I made yesterday afternoon. Looking by accident into William Law's works I found at the beginning of the second volume an answer to Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees.* The first section is one of the most remarkable philosophical essays I have ever seen in English. This section has all the highest beauty of Law's polemical compositions with a weight of pithy, right reason, such as fills one's heart with joy.' So highly did Maurice also think of Law's *Remarks on the Fable of the Bees* that he published a special edition of the neglected book in 1844 with a characteristic and valuable introduction from his own pen. Even Gibbon says that morality as well as religion must join in Law's applause for the manner in which he drew his pen against Mandeville's licentious doctrines. The *Remarks* is, indeed, a fine piece of philosophical polemic, red-hot throughout with a passionate indignation. How human virtue has its origin and seat and sanction in the Divine virtue; how obligation arises in the reason and conscience of man; how our human idea of God is formed; how and what happiness is the perfection of human nature; and how our liberty and our conduct act upon the formation of character, and on our ultimate desert and destiny:—the whole treatise is, indeed, all that it has been called, an essay in moral philosophy, and a gem in literature such that to read it fills one's heart with joy. Mandeville is a powerful and attractive writer. He sees the seamy side of life; he sees seams and creases and stains and scars, indeed, when they exist only in his own polluted imagination and corrupt heart. I can quite well understand why Mandeville had so many readers in the eighteenth century in England, and why so few of those who tried it were able to answer him.

AGAINST THE STAGE.

Law's next publication was a sixpenny pamphlet entitled *The Absolute Unlawfulness of the Stage Entertainment fully Demonstrated.* 'I am sensible,' says Law, in the opening sentence of his tract, 'that the title of this little book will, to the generality of people, seem too high a flight; that it will be looked upon as the effect of a fanatical spirit carrying matters higher than the sobriety of religion requires.' And the anticipation of its author has turned out to be quite true concerning his tremendous attack upon the

theatre. 'Law's admirers,' says Canon Overton, one of his greatest admirers, 'will regret that he ever published this tract.' Well, no. I, too, am one of Law's admirers, and after reading the universally disowned tract over and over again, and reading it in the light of all that has been said against it, I cannot honestly say that I regret its publication. I know something of what has been said as to the ideal stage with all its educating, refining, and diverting possibilities. But, all the more, do I not regret Law's onslaught on the actual stage of his day. No doubt *Cato* was put on the stage of Law's day, but one swallow maketh not summer. And, if for nothing else, I read and re-read the tract which contains Trebonia, who goes 'but seldom to the playhouse, and then either with her mother or her aunt. And, besides, she always knows the play beforehand, and she never goes on the sacrament week.' And Levis, who has this to set against all Law's arguments that 'the diversion of the theatre never did him any hurt.' And Jucunda, who, with great cheerfulness, says that 'after all is said, the stage is but a small sin, and, considering the wickedness of the age, she thinks that the person who is only guilty of going to the play is in a very good state indeed. God send I may have no greater sin to answer for than seeing a play!' Law is undoubtedly strong even to extremity in his polemic against the stage of the eighteenth century; but after the true mean has been found, and duty and safety and liberty have had their boundaries fixed as regards this diversion, there will remain many passages in this tract that for a noble solemnity, as well as for a moral severity, William Law alone in his loose generation could have ventured to write.

AS A WRITER ON PRACTICAL RELIGION: 'CHRISTIAN PERFECTION'

In his thirty-eighth year Law published a volume of considerable size, entitled, *A Practical Treatise upon Christian Perfection*. This was Law's first treatise on personal religion, and its appearance placed him at once in the very first rank of our practical and homiletical authors also. I do not wonder at the immense impression that great book made on the generation to which it was immediately addressed; for, to this day, it is impossible to read it seriously without our hearts being taken by storm, and without our whole after-life being powerfully affected by it. As his method always is, Law begins in the *Christian Perfection* at the beginning.

He bottoms his book deep in the nature of fallen man, in the nature of sin, and in the nature and design of true religion; and he works up from all that to the very highest attainments of Christian experience and out from all that to the finest fulfilments of Christian obedience. In his *Christian Perfection,* Law takes us into a strait gate indeed, and leads us along a narrow way; but what of that when every step of the way rewards us with new liberty and with a nobler prospect, till he lands us at last without spot or blemish before the throne of God. In this, as in all his practical books, Law cuts to the bone. He seizes and holds all the defiles and dark passes of the heart. When John Wesley on one occasion complained to Law that his doctrine of Christian perfection was too high to be attainable, Law replied, 'We shall do well to aim at the highest degree of perfection if we may thereby at least attain to mediocrity.' The literature of the *Christian Perfection* also, though it has not yet attained to the balance and ease and finish of the *Serious Call,* is delightful. The characters who cross the stage from time to time as the argument goes on are drawn with all Law's insight, sagacity, humane satire, and sparkling wit, till those who sit beside us as we read Law to ourselves wonder what we get to laugh at in such a forbidding book.

AT PUTNEY: THE GIBBONS

Law is in his thirty-ninth year when we find him living in comfort and honour and happiness in Mr. Edward Gibbon's house at Putney as the tutor of his son who was afterwards the father of the famous historian. Gibbon, the old merchant, was a man of uncommon ability. His grandson tells us with pride that Lord Bolingbroke had been heard to declare that he had never conversed with a man who more clearly understood the commerce and finance of England than Edward Gibbon did. And the old merchant showed that he understood more and better things than commerce and finance when he took William Law into his household. Macaulay has three or four very characteristic pages on the life of dependence and even degradation that so many of the nonjuring and unbeneficed clergy of the Church of England lived in the houses of rich city merchants and country gentlemen in that

day. But the brilliant and epigrammatic historian would have had to tone down his highly-coloured picture of the trencher-chaplains of that day if there had been more poor scholars of the habits and character and temper of Mr. Gibbon's chaplain-tutor. We are deeply indebted to John Byrom's *Journal* for the impressive picture we possess of Law's life at Putney. Byrom is a kind of Pepys in the way he keeps his journal, and a kind of Boswell in the way he hangs upon and worships his master. And, altogether, vain and lazy and garrulous and good-liver as Byrom is, yet he compels from us a certain respect if only for his love of good men and good books. With all Byrom's provoking ways Law had a great liking for the restless irrepressible stenographer. Byrom had some not despicable literary gifts of his own. Three or four of his papers were admitted into the *Spectator*, and there is a volume of poems of his still extant; but it is by his journal that Byrom will be best remembered, and it, again, by those passages in it in which William Law appears. Byrom was so struck and influenced for good by Law's *Serious Call* and *Christian Perfection* that he took boldness to go out to Putney and introduce himself to the great author, and many were the visits he afterwards made, and many were the conversations about men and books they held together as they walked to and fro in Mr. Gibbon's garden. All up and down Byrom's queer conglomerate of a journal Law's name and the names of his famous books continually appear. We talked about Mr. Law: we fell out about Mr. Law: So-and-so has just bought and begun to read Mr. Law's books: So-and-so's life has been totally changed by reading Mr. Law's *Call*: I supped too late and ate too much last night and lay too long to-day for an admirer of Mr. Law: in a hundred such coffee-house entries in his journal and letters to his wife, Byrom in these ways returns to Law till we have such a portrait of Law as only a thousand such touches can produce. But all that Byrom writes only goes to set and illustrate the noble praise that Gibbon pronounces on Law in his *Memoirs of My Life and Writings*. 'In our family William Law left the reputation of a worthy and pious man who believed all that he professed, and practised all that he enjoined.' That from Edward Gibbon's mature pen is a monument more lasting than brass.

BYROM

JOHN WESLEY

Among the many visitors to Putney was a student from Oxford who was destined to make a deeper and a more lasting mark on the world than any other man of his day. Law's books had made a very deep impression on John Wesley, till, as Law said after they had fallen out: 'I was at that time a sort of oracle to John Wesley.' The bitter quarrel that broke out between Wesley and Law is a perplexing and a painful subject, and I shall not attempt to discuss it here. The ins and outs of the dispute are set forth with admirable impartiality both by Mr. Tyerman in his excellent *Life of Wesley* and by Canon Overton in his equally excellent *Life of Law*. It is most refreshing and reassuring, and it reads us an excellent lesson, to see how Tyerman puts Wesley in the wrong, and Overton Law. Both biographers bring out that Wesley's attack on his old master was inevitable, given the man and given the great change he passed through after he had taken Peter Böhler to be his new master. But it is not the less to be deplored that the two most influential and two of the best men of that whole century should have made themselves such a spectacle of acrimony and recrimination. A large part if not the whole of the truth in that most unhappy controversy lay in this: that Law and Wesley in their intellectual life and their religious experience, as well as in the work to which their Master had called them, were perhaps as different as two able and good men could well be. Wesley was fitted to be a popular and most impressive preacher, while Law was never allowed to preach, but was early set apart by Divine Providence to think and read and write. The work of Wesley's life was to preach awakening sermons, whereas, to take up already awakened and converted men, and especially converted men of the educated and intellectual class, and compel them to a more consecrated life, was the equally divine commission of William Law. And, surely, if they could only both have seen it, there was scope enough and call enough within the lines of Evangelical Christianity for two such signally gifted if signally individual men. We see now that William Law without John Wesley, as well as John Wesley without William Law, would have left the religious life and literature of the eighteenth century both weak, one-sided, and unsafe. Could they both but have seen it,

both were indispensable: John Wesley to complete William Law, and William Law to complete John Wesley.

THE 'SERIOUS CALL'

It was during his quiet residence at Putney that Law wrote his famous masterpiece, the *Serious Call.* I shall not enter here on any description or discussion of that matchless book. It is the only one of all Law's books that is easily accessible in our day; but, happily, it is easily accessible to everybody. I shall not begin, great as the temptation is, to praise the *Serious Call,* or even to attempt to say what I myself owe to it and through it to its author. Let those praise the book who can do so with authority, and whose voices will be listened to. Take, first, what John Wesley says about this book, after his lifelong quarrel with its author. 'The *Serious Call,*' says Wesley, in his old age, 'is a treatise which will hardly be excelled, if it be equalled, in the English tongue, either for beauty of expression, or for justness and depth of thought. It is a treatise which must remain, as long as England endures, an almost unequalled standard of the strength and purity of our language as well as of sound practical divinity.' 'Soon after I went to the university,' says George Whitefield, 'I met with Mr. Law's *Serious Call,* but had not money to purchase it. Afterwards I purchased a small edition of the book, and by means of it God worked powerfully upon my soul as He has since upon many others by that and by Law's other excellent treatise, the *Christian Perfection.*' 'When I was at Oxford,' said Dr. Johnson, 'I took up Law's *Serious Call to a Holy Life,* expecting to find it a dull book (as such books generally are), and perhaps to laugh at it. But I found Law quite an overmatch for me, and this was the first occasion of my thinking in earnest of religion.' And again: 'Law's *Serious Call* is the finest piece of hortatory theology in any language.' 'Mr. Law's masterpiece,' says Gibbon, 'is a powerful book. His precepts are rigid, but they are founded on the gospel: his satire is sharp, but it is drawn from his knowledge of human life, and many of his portraits are not unworthy the pen of La Bruyère.' 'Though I live,' writes a minister, 'in a small country village, I have had sufficient work on my hands to bring my parishioners to any tolerable degree of piety and goodness. I

preached and laboured among them incessantly; and yet, after all, was convinced that my work had been as fruitless as casting pearls before swine. I purchased many religious works and distributed them among my people; but, alas! I could perceive no visible effects. About this time I happened to peruse Mr. Law's *Serious Call*, with which I was so much charmed and greatly edified that I resolved my flock should partake of the same spiritual food. I therefore gave to each person in my parish one of those useful books, and charged them upon my blessing to carefully peruse the same. My perseverance was now crowned with success, and I had the satisfaction of beholding my people reclaimed from a life of folly and impiety to a life of holiness and devotion.' And the Rev. David Young of Perth, who prepared an edition of the *Serious Call* for publication by William Collins of Glasgow in 1827, says of it, 'The *Serious Call* will never fall into oblivion. It is sustained by a brilliancy of genius, and has risen to a rank of favour with the intellectual and the tasteful which no neglect and no vituperation of its enemies can overcome.' And Augustine Birrell, in his *Res Judicatae*, describes William Law to his readers as 'the inimitable author of the *Serious Call*;' and speaking of Gibbon, goes on to say that 'splendid achievement of learning and industry though the *Decline and Fall* may be, glorious monument though it is, more lasting than marble, yet in sundry moods it seems but a poor and barren thing by the side of a book, which, like the *Serious Call*, has proved its power "to pierce the heart and tame the will."'

'THE CASE OF REASON.'

Matthew Tindal was the Voltaire of England without Voltaire's genius. As it was, Tindal was by far the ablest exponent of the Deism of his day, and, consequently, the ablest enemy of revealed religion. Law was at his best when Tindal's attack on Christianity appeared, and he lost no time in putting on his armour. Mr. Leslie Stephen has very little sympathy with William Law's religious principles, but Mr. Stephen is historian enough and critic enough to hold the scales even when he is weighing the merits of the deistical debate. 'The question raised,' says Stephen, 'by Law's answer to Tindal is how such a master of English and of reasoning should have sunk into such oblivion.' Dr. Arnold has described

the eighteenth century as the great misused seed-time of modern Europe. William Law's works were one of the richest seed-baskets of that century, and its seed stands still unused down at the end of the nineteenth century. Those who love practical religion best give the palm to the *Serious Call*; but there have been able theologians who have held that *The Case of Reason* is Law's masterpiece. Speaking for myself, I prefer several of Law's books to his reply to Tindal; but that does not prevent me from feeling and acknowledging the massiveness of mind and the nobleness of spirit with which the argument against Deism is carried on. 'Here at last,' Leslie Stephen sums up, 'we are face to face with a man who believes what he says, who is fighting for what he loves, and is striking at the heart. This man despises your vamped-up and second-hand eloquence, he writes with the freedom of a man who is thoroughly at home in his own doctrines, and with the force, brilliance, and terseness of a clear-headed reasoner. Law simply tears Tindal's flimsy fallacy to rags.'

AT KING'S CLIFFE.

For ten years the poor nonjuring scholar had found a happy home in Mr. Gibbon's house at Putney. So much esteemed was the tutor by the head of the house and by the whole family, and so famous as the years went on had his name become, that Law was looked on less as a dependant than a beloved and honoured member of the household. Mr. Gibbon's hospitable table was always open to his tutor's visitors, Byrom, the Wesleys, and suchlike; his purse was always open when his tutor wished to buy books; and, altogether, Law had ten years of great intellectual activity and great happiness in the old merchant's house at Putney. But Mr. Gibbon's death in 1736 suddenly put an end to all that, and soon after we find Law back again at King's Cliffe and settled as a bachelor householder in an old edifice that had been left to him by his deceased father. In the year 1744 we find the old palace, as it was called, peopled by a most remarkable household. A widow lady, named Mrs. Hutcheson, along with Miss Hester Gibbon, one of his old pupils and an aunt of the future historian, had entered into a domestic arrangement with Law, and had taken

up their quarters in King John's palace, as the old house was by tradition called. By Christopher Walton's passionate devotion to all that belongs to the name of William Law, we have collected for us a mass of biographical material belonging to this period of Law's life, which only waits for the fit biographer for whom Walton so long advertised in vain to digest that indefatigable collector's stores into one of the most interesting, impressive, and instructive chapters of Christian biography in the language. I question if there is a more arresting, impressive, and instructive picture in the whole range of Christian biography than we have in the daily round of study and devotion and charity that William Law punctiliously fulfilled for the next twenty years in the old mansion-house at King's Cliffe.

Law by this time was well turned fifty, but he rises as early and is as soon at his desk as when he was still a new, enthusiastic, and scrupulously methodical student at Cambridge. Summer and winter Law rose to his devotions and his studies at five o'clock, not because he had imperative sermons to prepare, but because, in his own words, it is more reasonable to suppose a person up early because he is a Christian than because he is a labourer or a tradesman or a servant. I have a great deal of business to do, he would say. I have a hardened heart to change; I have still the whole spirit of religion to get. When Law at any time felt a temptation to relax his rule of early devotion he again reminded himself how fast he was becoming an old man, and how far back his sanctification still was, till he flung himself out of bed and began again to make himself a new heart before the servants had lighted their fires or the farmers had yoked their horses. Shame on you, he said to himself, to lie folded up in a bed when you might be pouring out your heart in prayer and praise, and thus be preparing yourself for a place among those blessed beings who rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, Holy! All the time he was dressing, and till he sat down to his desk, Law occupied his thoughts with thanksgiving. He had laid himself down last night saying to himself, What, O my soul, if we should waken in eternity! And that he wakened once more in a place of repentance and had another day of salvation and service before him was every new

morning a fresh cause of warm thanksgiving. As a rule, he began his devotions with a thanksgiving psalm or chapter or collect, but he did not confine himself to any one form of prayer or praise. As soon as he felt his heart ready to break forth into strains of devotion on its own account and in its own language, he immediately gave himself up to those inward fervours. Not seldom he needed no book at all, not even to commence his devotions with. Not seldom, both in the early morning and all the day, Law was so filled with an overpowering compunction that no language could relieve his heart but that of silent tears. Then, again, he religiously reserved a certain spot, first of his bedroom and then of his little study, for secret prayer. He never allowed himself to do anything common on that spot, till he came to find that just to kneel in that spot was a real and sure assistance toward a spirit of prayer.

He collected also into a manuscript book, and that not for pulpit use, but for his own secret assistance, all the best forms of devotion he ever lighted on. As he read the Psalms, he collected all the confessions, petitions, praises, resignations, and thanksgivings scattered up and down the Psalter, and ranged them under their proper heads as so much sacred fuel for his own fire. And from all this he discovered that though the spirit of devotion is the gift of God, and not attainable by any mere power of our own, yet it is mostly given to, and never withheld from, those who by a wise and diligent use of the proper means, prepare themselves for the reception of it. Many a morning Law never got to his studies at all, and nine o'clock, the third hour of his day of study and prayer, had often come before he had got himself torn away from the devotions and meditations of the early morning. A deeper humility was always the burden of Law's prayers for himself at the third hour of the day. Law's work lay largely, as we have seen, in philosophical and theological controversy, and he felt a mighty want of humility in his intercourse with men and papers and books. And, full of pride and scorn and contempt and ill-will as he knew himself by nature to be, he felt a wonderful change gradually coming over his spirit as he prayed year after year, and every day of the year, expressly and particularly, and pleading

instances for the divine nature of humility. After an hour spent at the appointed place where he met every forenoon the poor of the village and even the mendicants of the whole country, he had two or three hours' hard study before dinner-time. But before he appeared at early dinner he had a fixed appointment to pray in secret every day for the divine grace of universal love. See what he says in the *Serious Call* about universal love. It would open your eyes, it would alter your whole life, both of prayer and of practice.

INTERCESSORY PRAYER

One thing he keeps saying continually, and that is the sure sanctification that comes to that man's own sinful heart who is importunate and particular in intercessory prayer. You cannot, he argues, continue to hate or envy, or feel spite or ill-will at a man if you persist in praying for him and seeking his good. It is an axiom of Law's that intercessory prayer is an infallible means of renewing and cleansing and sweetening the heart. Try it, he says, and see. Sir James Mackintosh has claimed the striking title of a discoverer in morals for Bishop Butler on the ground of his doctrine of conscience in his *Three Sermons on Human Nature*; and no lower designation than that of a discoverer in experimental religion will adequately describe William Law in what he has written on the reflex effects of intercessory prayer. 'What remains,' says Butler, in his profound sermon on The Ignorance of Man, 'is that we learn to keep our heart, to govern and regulate our passions and our affections, that we may be free from the impotencies of fear, envy, malice, covetousness, ambition, considered as vices seated in the heart. He who should find out one rule to assist us in this work would deserve infinitely better of mankind than all the improvers of all other knowledge put together.' Now, what is claimed for William Law is just this, that he has found out such a rule. Let any man who is keeping his heart with all diligence just try Law's rule upon his own heart and see the result. Every day the London post brought letters to King's Cliffe from people who were reading the recluse's books and were getting untold good out of them. But the postman's bag brought other things also. A great controversy—many great controversies—had sprung up out of Law's writings. We have

already seen what a many-sided and powerful controversialist Law was. He had been a man of war for the truth from his youth up. His hand had been against every enemy of the truth. And he had all a controversialist's temptations to overcome. And how was a constant controversialist like Law to keep himself humble and full of universal love? How, but just by the way Law spent the ninth hour of every day? When things seemed to go ill with the cause of truth and righteousness in controversy or in actual life, Law at once fell back on the assurance that God's ways must of necessity be a great deep to the mind of man. And when hurts and wrongs, crosses and vexations, came to himself, Law knew himself well enough to see why God sent them or permitted them to come. It was often remarked that Law struck only for the truth. There was never perhaps a life-long controversialist whose hands were so clean of his enemy's blood. You are here, he said to himself, to have no tempers, and no self-designs, and no self-ends, but to fill some place, and act some part, in strict conformity and thankful resignation to the Divine good pleasure. Begin, therefore, in the smallest matters and most ordinary occasions, and accustom yourself to the daily exercise of this pious temper in the lowest occurrences of life. And when a contempt, an affront, a little injury, a loss, or a disappointment, or the smallest events of every day come to try you, continually raise your mind to God in proper acts of resignation, and then you may justly hope that you shall be numbered among those who are resigned and thankful to God in the greatest trials and afflictions. 'Perform,' says a writer in morals, 'a little gratuitous exercise every day. That is to say, be systematically ascetic or heroic in little unnecessary points; do every day or two something for no other reason than that you would rather not do it; so that, when the hour of dire need draws nigh, it may find you nerved and trained to stand the test. Then you will stand like a tower when everything rocks around you and when your softer fellow-mortals are scattered like chaff.' I leave you to picture Law at bedtime to yourselves after telling you what he says about self-examination. An evening repentance, he says, which brings all the actions of the day to account is not only necessary to wipe off the guilt of sin, but is also the most certain

way to amend and perfect our lives. For it is only such a repentance as this is that touches the heart, awakens the conscience, and leaves a horror and detestation of sin upon the mind. An examination thus managed will in a little time make you as different from yourself as a wise man is different from an idiot. It will give you such a newness of mind, such a spirit of wisdom, and such a desire after perfection as you were an utter stranger to before. Represent to your imagination that your bed is your grave, and that you have no more to do with this world, and then commit yourself to sleep, as into the hands of God, as one that is to have no more opportunities of doing good, but is to awake among spirits that are separate from the body and are waiting for the judgment of the last great day. This, if you pursue it, is a practice that will soon have an excellent effect upon your spirit and your life. 'How,' asks the disciple of the Master in Behmen's *Supersensual Life*, 'how shall I be able to subsist in all this anxiety and tribulation so as not to lose the eternal peace?' And the Master answers: 'If thou dost once every hour throw thyself by faith beyond all creatures into the abysmal mercy of God, into the sufferings of our Lord, and into the fellowship of His intercession, and yieldest thyself fully and absolutely thereinto, then thou shalt receive power from above to rule over death and the devil, and to subdue hell and the world under thee. And then thou mayest not only endure in all manner of temptation, but be actually the better and the brighter because of them.' By a life of study of the best authors, by a life of good works and devotional tempers and practices such as these, William Law kept his mind open to all truth, and his heart open to all love, and his life open to all opportunities of doing good, till he made himself, till God made him, the ablest defender of the truth, the most powerful and impressive writer on practical religion of his day, and one of the most saintly men that ever lived on the earth.

HIS CHARITIES

During the Putney period of his life, when Law was standing one day in the door of his publisher's shop in Paternoster Row looking at the passing crowd, a young man in the dress and with the manners of a gentleman's servant stepped out of the crowd and asked him if he was Mr. Law, and put a letter with that

address into his hand. When Law opened the letter he found inside of it a bank-note for a thousand pounds. No name accompanied the note and by the time that Law had looked up from his letter the messenger had gone. But there could be no doubt about it. There was the correct address, The Reverend William Law, M.A., and inside the thousand pounds. Some well-wisher, some one who had read the *Three Letters* and the *Christian Perfection,* had taken this anonymous way of conveying his gratitude to the unbeneficed author. Before Law had left the doorstep he had taken his resolution; for, has not Gibbon told us that his father's old tutor believed all that he professed and practised all that he enjoined? For years Law had had the poor widows and orphans of King's Cliffe on his heart, and he had often said to himself that if he were only a rich man they should not need to beg their bread. And now, behold, in a moment, and without any effort or desert of his, he was a rich man. And, accordingly, next morning Law took the first coach to King's Cliffe and before he returned to Putney he had made arrangements for the building and endowment of a residential school for fourteen poor girls. And then in after-years when he had retired to the Manor House of his native town, and when his books had begun to bring him in some royalty, and when old Mrs. Hutcheson, the rich merchant's widow, and Miss Gibbon, his old pupil, had come to live with him, the three charitable souls all threw their incomes into a common purse, lived with all the frugality and modesty set forth in Law's practical books, the *Christian Perfection* and the *Serious Call,* and gave all to the poor. Schools were built for orphan boys and girls. *Viduarum Hospitia* were endowed. Schoolmasters' houses and a library were fitted up which last as 'The Law and Hutcheson Charities' to this day. Rule 5 for the King's Cliffe hospital runs thus: 'Only such old and poor women, widows or ancient maidens, as are of good report for their sobriety, industry, and Christian character in their several stations are qualified. No ancient women of ill manners, or of unchristian behaviour, no idle, gossiping, or slothful persons shall be nominated.' At the same time, while all this tender and scrupulous care was taken of the Christian poor, the window of Law's study

was open for an hour every forenoon at which his charity ran so free that he got into difficulties with the rector for demoralising the parish with his too open window. The rules and regulations of the Law and Hutcheson schools are extant to this day in the handwriting of Mr. Law and Miss Gibbon. They run on such lines as these: 'Rule 18. The master at his first entrance into the school in the morning is to pray with the children, and again at twelve o'clock, and again at their breaking up in the evening.' And Rule 4 for the girls' school, 'Every girl at her entrance in the morning shall kneel down by her mistress and with her hands held up together shall say the prayer appointed for the morning, and before they go away shall say the prayers for the evening, and at their rising up shall make a curtsey. . . . No girl shall talk, or laugh, or make any noise in the room where her mistress is. Every girl that gives the lie to any other girl, or calls another a fool, or uses any rude or unmannerly word, shall kneel down and in the presence of them all shall say, I am heartily sorry for the wicked words that I have spoken. I humbly beg pardon of God and of all you that are here present, hoping and promising by the help of God never to offend again in like manner. Then shall the girl that she has abused come and take her up from her knees and kiss her, and both turning to their mistress, they shall make a curtsey and return to their seats. . . . Every girl when she walks in the streets shall make curtseys to all masters and mistresses of families, and to all ancient people whether rich or poor. They shall also make a curtsey when they enter into any house and at their coming out of it.' And so on for seventeen such happy rules which were read over and explained to the children every Monday morning when the children all knelt down and said after the mistress the following prayer: 'Almighty and Most Merciful Father, we give Thee humble thanks for all Thy mercies to us and to all mankind. We bless Thy Holy Name for that Thou hast called us to this place to be brought up in Thy faith and fear, to learn Thy holy word, and to turn our hearts to Thee in the days of our youth. We here offer ourselves, our souls, and our bodies, to Thee. Grant us, Holy Father, that we, thus beginning our lives in humility and labour, in praying and reading, may, as we grow

in age, grow in good works, and at last attain the salvation of our souls, through the merits and mediation of our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Our Father, Which art in heaven. . . .' Such, adds the indefatigable Walton, are the particulars of the charities established at King's Cliffe by Mr. Law and under his direction, which, in common with all the other public acts and monuments of his life, are calculated to endear his name and character for wisdom, piety, and benevolence to the latest generations.

MYSTICISM

Nonjuror and mystic is the description that William Law usually goes by on the title-pages of his biographers and in the references made to him in church histories and in religious literature. We have seen something of the life that the nonjuror led and the work that he did; and it now remains for us to look for a little at Law as the chief of the English mystics. Most interesting as the subject is, and helpful as a short estimate of mysticism would be to enable us fully to understand Law, that cannot be attempted here. I must content myself with the bare mention of the names of a few mystical writers—'spiritual writers' Law always called them; but the mere mention of their names will perhaps leave some idea in our minds of what a mystic is. Plato was the prince of mystics among the Greek philosophers. And the Apostle John may, with all due reverence, be said to be a kind of mystic among the writers of the New Testament. Passing by fathers and mediæval philosophers and theologians who partake more or less of the mystic spirit, we come to such men as Tauler, à Kempis, the author of the *Theologia Germanica*, Jacob Behmen, Samuel Rutherford with all his logic, Peter Sterry Cromwell's chaplain, the Cambridge Platonists, Fénelon, Leighton, Jonathan Edwards in his earlier and later writings, William Blake, Coleridge in some moods of his mind, Newman in some moods of his mind, Wordsworth, Maurice, Keble, Tennyson in his *In Memoriam* especially, Stewart and Tait in their *Unseen Universe*, Martensen, George Mac Donald, and suchlike. The mere mention of these names, far apart as their owners are in time as well as in many other

things, will yet leave with us a picture of a certain type of mind and heart that we may not incorrectly call the mystic type. The true mystic begins with and never loses sight of this foundation truth, that man is made in the image of God. All Christian men admit that; but it is the distinguishing mark of the true mystic that he never forgets his high original, it is ever with him penetrating, illuminating, and inspiring all his reflections and all his devotions. Our Lord's words also, 'The kingdom of heaven is within you,' are deep down in the mystic's heart. As are also John's words concerning 'the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world,' and, indeed, all that John has written both in his Gospel and his Epistles. And Paul, who has everything, has mysticism too, and that even in the Epistle to the Romans. 'The invisible things of God are clearly seen from the creation of the world, being understood by the things that are made.' Not to speak of the whole of the Epistle to the Ephesians, and much more. 'I thank God,' wrote Law in one of his last books, 'that I have been a diligent reader of the mystical divines, through all ages of the church, from the apostolical Dionysius the Areopagite down to the great Fénelon and the illuminated Guion.' But of all these mystical writers it was the poor unlettered German shoemaker,

JACOB BEHMEN

Jacob Behmen, that made William Law a mystic. I can well believe that there are many of my readers who never heard so much as the name of Jacob Behmen, and there cannot be many who have ever read a line of his marvellous books. 'In an intimate interview I had with Mr. Law a few months before his decease,' says one of Law's early biographers, 'I inquired of him when and how he first met with Jacob Behmen's works. He replied that he had often reflected upon it with surprise that although when a tutor in London he had rummaged every bookseller's shop and book-stall in the metropolis, yet he had never met with a single book of Jacob Behmen's or even so much as knew the title of any one of them. The first notice he had of Behmen was from a treatise called *Fides et Ratio,* published at Amsterdam (1707), and soon after he accidentally obtained one of the best of Behmen's books. "When I first began to read Behmen's book," he says, "it put me into a perfect sweat. But as I discerned sound truths and the

glimmerings of a deep ground and sense even in the passages not then clearly intelligible to me, I followed the impulse to dig in Behmen with continual prayer to God for His help to understand His servant, till at length I discovered the wonderful treasure there was hid in this field."' Know thyself, said Jacob Behmen in every page of his heart-searching books to William Law. Seek above every other search the one noble knowledge of thyself. For, only in the ever-deepening knowledge of thyself shalt thou come to know sin, and only in the knowledge of thyself and thy sinfulness shalt thou ever know aught aright of God. Self is sin and God is love. Seek all thy knowledge, therefore, in the still deeper knowledge of thyself. Count all other knowledge but ignorance till thou knowest thyself. The knowledge of thyself is the pearl of great price, it is the treasure that no thief can steal, and that no rust can corrupt. The kingdom of heaven, the throne of grace, the Son of God, the Holy Ghost, are all within thee. So Behmen preaches in season and out of season. But, you will say, surely William Law knew all that long before he met with Jacob Behmen. He surely knew that the kingdom of heaven is not set up among the stars, nor the throne of God established and prepared in the sun or the moon. Yes, in a way he might be said to know all that before he met with Behmen. But we have his own solemn word for it that it was the poor unlettered German shoemaker who first made him see and feel all that with anything like its true reality and power. To borrow Law's own words about the daily and life-long reading of the Bible, Behmen gave him not so much any new information, but he took all Law's old information and drew out of it a new, a deep, a lasting, an everlasting impression. This, then, was the man, I can scarcely call him the author, who took up the greatest English theologian and the best practical writer of the eighteenth century and made him the greatest of our English mystics.

ON THE LORD'S SUPPER

It only remains to say something about the increasingly deep and noble books that William Law wrote after he had been taken possession of by Jacob Behmen. In the year 1737 Law published a book on the Lord's Supper. This treatise took the form of a reply to his old opponent, Bishop Hoadly, who had set forth a

doctrine of the Supper in which he had taught the lowest and most rationalistic views as to the nature and grounds of that ordinance. Law's doctrine of the Supper is a high doctrine in the best sense of that word. 'Everything that is great,' he sets out with saying, 'everything that is adorable in the redemption of mankind, everything that can delight, comfort, and support the heart of a Christian is found in this holy sacrament.' That the Supper is not merely a positive ordinance, as Hoadly held, but that it has its ground and its roots deep down in the very nature of things, Law argues out in a profound, most convincing, and most satisfying way. He passes on then to show his readers that there are two essential parts in this sacrament, which relate respectively to the twofold character and office of our Redeemer, first, as He is the atonement and satisfaction for our sins, and, second, as He is a principle of life to us. All the merit, all the dignity, all the virtue of the Supper, with all the blessings and advantages derived to us from it, and all the pious dispositions with which we are to approach it,—all this will come to him who aright understands and receives this twofold nature of the Supper. And starting on these deep principles Law passes on to expatiate on the blessings of redemption and on our need of it in all his own powerful and affecting way. The *Demonstration* is a book for trained theologians rather than for the body of communicants, and, indeed, there are not a few passages in it that will not be very intelligible even to trained theologians unless they have first read something of Behmen and have some sympathy with him. At the same time, Canon Overton, Law's Anglican biographer, is quite entitled to say that Law's churchmanship was only modified, not lost, when he became a mystic; and that on the Supper he holds as distinctly High Church views as he did when he measured swords with the same antagonist twenty years before. For myself I may say that the two best books by far I have ever read on the Lord's Supper are that of our own Calvinistic and Presbyterian Robert Bruce and that of the Anglican and Behmenite William Law.

'CHRISTIAN REGENERATION'

Our industrious author's next piece was a shilling tract entitled *The Ground and Reason of Christian Regeneration.* This fine treatise is steeped throughout in Law's new mysticism, and if he does not

transgress the Church Catechism and the Baptismal Service in his exposition and argument, it is because he rises far above both and expatiates in a region clear of every ecclesiastical creed that has ever been laid down. The super-confessional element, as Martensen calls it, that was so conspicuous in Behmen, the orthodox Lutheran, comes out in this and in all the subsequent works of Law, the equally orthodox Anglican. The *Christian Regeneration* is a delightful piece, and I do not wonder that my copy of this tract belongs to the seventh edition.

'ANSWER TO DR. TRAPP'

We owe Law's next work to the publication of Dr. Trapp's *Four Sermons on the Sin, Folly, and Danger of being Righteous Overmuch.* I have ill succeeded in setting William Law before you if you cannot imagine for yourselves something of the power, solemnity, and pathos of his *Serious Answer* to such a publication as that of Dr. Trapp. I must leave you to imagine what that book is, of which Mr. Tyerman, the biographer of Wesley, says that it is 'as grand a piece of writing as can be found in the English language.' Only, to assist your imagination I shall let you hear in one or two sentences how Law begins his answer to Trapp and how he ends it. 'Might I follow the bent of my own mind,' he begins, 'my pen, such as it is, should be wholly employed in setting forth the infinite love of God to mankind in Christ Jesus, and in endeavouring to draw all men to the belief and acknowledgment of it. The one great mercy of God, which makes the one, only happiness of all mankind, so justly deserves all our thoughts and meditations, so highly enlightens and improves every mind that is attentive to it, so removes all the evils of this present world, so sweetens every state of life, and so inflames the heart with the love of every divine and human virtue, that he is no small loser whose mind is either by writing or reading detained from the view and contemplation of it.' And then, after ninety pages of such serious matter as you can imagine, he closes thus: 'I desire no authority for what I have written but the gospel, else I could soon show that everything in my books that offends the doctor is again and again to be found not only in Thomas à Kempis and Jeremy Taylor, but in the writings of the most eminent saints through all ages of the church.'

'APPEAL TO ALL THAT DOUBT'

I must also leave untouched his next book, which has this bold and elaborate title-page, *An Appeal to all that doubt or disbelieve the Truths of the Gospel, whether they be Deists, Arians, Socinians, or Nominal Christians, in which the true Grounds and Reasons of the whole Christian Faith are plainly and fully Demonstrated.* The *Appeal* is the most original and the most complete of all Law's later works. You may think that Law is very bold on his title-page. And so he is. But by universal consent he fully performs all that he promises. All through the *Appeal* its author continually acknowledges that he is ploughing with Jacob Behmen's heifer, but, all the more, because of that, it must be proclaimed that the field that Law so ploughs is all his own, and that the furrows he draws in it have a depth, an order, and a beauty all their own also. I have no means of knowing what effect the *Appeal* had on the Deists, Arians, Socinians, and Nominal Christians of Law's day, but I can answer for the effect for good it has had on one nominal Christian at least in our day. It was about the *Appeal* that Samuel Johnson, *impransus*, wrote to Miss Boothby, 'I return you *Law*, which, however, I entreat you to give me.'

'THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER'

We come now to two truly golden books, *The Spirit of Prayer* and its companion volume, *The Spirit of Love.* Christopher Walton does not exaggerate one iota when he says that Law's readers will rise up from those books saying, These are the two best books in the world! The intellectual and experimental range of *The Spirit of Prayer* and *The Spirit of Love* is much more extended and profound than is the range of what is popularly known as orthodox and evangelical doctrine. Law does not write here—indeed, he never writes, though he always says he does—for the unlettered believer. The abler and the better informed the mind, and the more exercised in the divine life the heart that any reader brings to those two treatises, the more good will he get from them, and the more all his after-life will he value them. The dialogues which constitute so much of both those books are to my taste productions of a nothing less than a Platonic depth and beauty. I have laid down those books again and again saying with Walton: In their way, and on their subjects, show me another two books like those in all the world! And if only to show you that Walton

and I are not alone in our exquisite estimate of *The Spirit of Prayer*, just listen to what the editor of the Glasgow edition says about it. 'For myself,' he says, 'I cannot extol this book too highly. I think it ought to be printed in diamonds. Nor am I a wild enthusiast in saying this. I have had forty years' intimate acquaintance with this book. I have also read all known spiritual writers in the world with much general satisfaction. But after all that I turn to William Law's *Spirit of Prayer*, and conclude that it stands far above them all.' Sir James Mackintosh has adduced the memorable instances of Cicero and Milton and Dryden and Burke in support of his idea that there is some natural tendency in the fire of genius to burn more brightly in the evening than in the morning of human life. And this was signally the case with William Law. His seraphic genius literally blazed up to heaven in the evening of his holy life till we cannot take up *The Spirit of Prayer* or *The Spirit of Love* into our hands without feeling that we are in the presence of a man whose heart was an absolute altar-fire. 'The first part of *The Spirit of Prayer* you read to me,' says Rusticus in the dialogue, 'more than three or four times, and that is the reason why I am in no state of eagerness after a second part. I have found in the first part all that I need to know of God, of Christ, of myself, of heaven, of hell, of sin, of grace, of death, and of salvation. I have found that all these things have their being, their life, and their working in my own heart. That God is always in me: that Christ is always in me: that He is the inward light and life of my soul, a bread from heaven which I may always eat, a water of eternal life springing up in my soul of which I may always drink. O my friend, these truths have opened up a new life in my soul. I am brought home to myself: the veil is taken off my heart. I have found my God. I know now that His dwelling-place, His kingdom, is within me. My eyes, my ears, my thoughts are all now turned inwards because all that God and Christ and grace are doing for me, and all that the devil, the world, and the flesh are working against me, are only to be known and found there. What need, then, of so much news from abroad since all that concerns either life or death are all transacting and are all at work within me? I now know to

what it is that I am daily to die, and to what it is that I am daily to live, and, therefore, I look upon every day as lost that does not help forward both this death and this life in me. I have not yet half done what the first part of *The Spirit of Prayer* directs me to do, and therefore have but little occasion to call out for a second.'

'THE WAY TO DIVINE KNOWLEDGE'

The third part of *The Spirit of Prayer* was intended by Law to be an introduction to a new edition of Behmen's works, for which Law had now for a long time been preparing himself. 'I taught myself the High Dutch language on purpose that I might know the original words of the blessed Jacob, and if it please God that I undertake this work, I shall only attempt to make J. B. speak as he would have spoken had he written in English. Also, by prefaces and introductions and notes to prepare and direct the reader to the true use of these writings.' But Law did not live to carry out this cherished design. And thus it is that the four-volume quarto edition of Behmen which we possess, and which is often advertised and referred to as Law's translation, is not Law's at all. It is only a reprint of an old edition which was first published during the time of the Commonwealth, with some allegorical plates added which Law's executors found among his papers, and which were originally from the pencil of Freher, Behmen's German editor. What a treasure we have thus lost by the death of Law we only too well see as we are carried through *The Way to Divine Knowledge*. The four friends are met again, and Humanus, the Deist, who has been silent till now, opens the conversation. He is frank to confess that the conversation he has been privileged to listen to has completely overcome him. 'I must yield,' he says; 'you have taken from me all power of cavilling and disputing. What I have read and heard glows in my soul like a fire, like a hunger which nothing can satisfy but a further view of those great truths which I this day expect from your opening to us the mysteries of heaven revealed to that wonderful man, Jacob Behmen.' And then Theophilus, who is just Law himself, takes the lead in the dialogue, and the result is, as I have said, such an exposition of Behmen's doctrines and services as would have proved a worthy introduction to an adequate edition of the

Teutonic philosopher. As it is, the English reader must content himself with such expositions of Behmen as are scattered up and down Law's later works; and, in spite of Mr. Leslie Stephen's flout at Christopher Walton, let no student of Behmen and Law neglect that indefatigable and able, if somewhat erratic and unconventional, author, or, rather, author's collector and referee. One reader at any rate has neither been bewildered nor even wearied, as Mr. Stephen said he would be, among the theosophical quagmires and gigantic footnotes of Walton. I have read Walton's enormous book over and over again with delight, with benefit, and with gratitude.

'THE SPIRIT OF LOVE'

Law's truly heavenly treatise, *The Spirit of Love*, is, itself, besides all else, a perfect triumph of that same divine spirit. For that fine work was called forth by the persistent objections that both his friends and his enemies had made to many things in his later writings. And while gathering up into an ordered and systematic whole all the best and most characteristic things in his later books, Law gives them over again here with a fulness and a finish that make *The Spirit of Love* the copestone and crown of all his compositions. And, better than all that, he illustrates and adorns this most delightful book with a wisdom and a meekness, and with a display of that all-embracing love of which William Law was, of all our modern men, surely the chosen apostle. While the most humble and simply believing and the least rationalistic of theologians, at the same time, Law sets out in *The Spirit of Love* to give a profound and complete rationale of the origin and the nature of sin, the origin and the nature of the love and the wrath of God, the origin and the nature of the atoning death of our Lord, and so on. Like his master Jacob Behmen, Law moves deep down among the primitive and unfrequented roots of things. He sees the unseen roots of things with his own eyes, and he tells what he sees in his own words, till it may safely be said that no man of a sufficiently open and sufficiently serious mind can read Law on these awful and unfathomable subjects without having his seriousness immensely deepened and his love to God and man for all his days fed to a seraphic flame. The second dialogue of *The Spirit of Love* has been reprinted by the

late Bishop Ewing in his *Present-Day Papers on Theology*; but, even with the Bishop's excellent preface, the reader is plunged into the very depths of Law's doctrines without the needful discipline of mind and heart that the consecutive and cumulative reading of his peculiarly germinant and organic books can alone give to the student. 'Before you leave me,' says Theophilus, 'I beg one more conversation to be on the practical part of the spirit of love; that so doctrine and practice, hearing and doing, may go hand in hand.' I wish Bishop Ewing, or some such student of Law, had reprinted for the Christian public the third and practical part of Law's great work.

'ADDRESS TO THE CLERGY'

Law's last book, which he did not live to correct for the press, is entitled, *An Humble, Earnest, and Affectionate Address to the Clergy*. Law had never been in active pulpit and parish work himself; he held by his nonjuring principles to the end; but his whole heart was in the ministry, as a thousand passages scattered up and down his writings sufficiently show us. And, accordingly, in the *Humble Address* Law sums up all the authorship of his long and fruitful life, and brings it all to bear with an overpowering impressiveness on the younger clergy of the Church of England. He had often had the younger clergy in his eye as he composed his former books, but this now is his dying charge to them. And it is very characteristic of Law that he does not set out to address his younger brethren on any of their properly professional duties. There is not one word about books, though he had been a life-long student himself. There is not a single word about how to compose or deliver a sermon. Law leaves all that to his readers to find out for themselves. And he keeps himself and them to the end of his overpowering address to the purest substance and the innermost essence of a minister's work. In a letter, dated Philadelphia, 1767, I find the following passage: 'Mr. Law's *Address to the Clergy* was the first of his books that fell into my hands. I took it up with much prejudice in my mind against its author, whom I had always heard spoken of as an enthusiast. But I had not read half the pamphlet before my heart was visited with such sensations as I had never felt before. My mind, which had hitherto been unsettled, dark, doubting, and yet anxious to find the truth,

became calm, serene, and sweetly composed. I had found my God. I had found my Redeemer. I had found the origin and source of my disorder, and with that the only means of consolation and of a perfect cure.' But, by the time that American letter arrived in England, William Law had been taken to that world of light and love where neither the praise nor the blame of this world could follow him.

ILLNESS AND DEATH

It was when Law was engaged on some out-of-doors business connected with the King's Cliffe charity schools that he took the severe cold that ended in his death. Till well beyond his three-score years and ten Law had enjoyed splendid health. He started on life with a sound constitution, and all his days he took good care of it. We shall not forget his early hours, his temperate and almost ascetical habits, his regularity in study and devotion and exercise, and the serenity of his noble mind continually occupied even to ecstasy with the most sublime objects of human contemplation. Law's deathbed was one long rapture. He fell asleep at that morning hour at which for a lifetime he had been wont to make his study vocal with his songs of thanksgiving for another new day. And his ruling passion was strong enough even in death to raise him up in his bed while he sang with his last breath the angels' song of peace and goodwill on the plains of Bethlehem. The last words that were heard from his lips were something like these: 'Take away the filthy garments from him, and clothe him with a change of raiment.' And these: 'I feel within me a consuming fire of heavenly love which has burned up in my soul everything that was contrary to itself and transformed me inwardly into its own nature.' And thus, like a saint already satisfied with the Divine likeness, William Law breathed his last on the morning of the 9th of April 1761.

CHARACTERISTICS

GOD

HIS ESSENCE

WE cannot see or apprehend the Essence of God.—[*Serious Call*, p. 457.]

AND ATTRIBUTES

WE cannot ascribe anything to God of which we have not some conception ourselves. Did we not perceive some degrees of wisdom, we could not call Him All-wise; did we not feel power, and understand what it is, we could not ascribe Omnipotence to God. For our idea of God is only formed by adding *Infinite* to every perfection that we have any knowledge of.—[*Remarks upon The Fable of the Bees*, p. 30.]

THE greatest idea that we can frame of God is when we conceive Him to be a Being of infinite love and goodness, using an infinite wisdom and power for the common good and happiness of all His creatures.—[*Serious Call*, p. 392.]

HIS SELF-EVIDENCE

BUT now, if you turn from all these idle debates and demonstrations of reason to that which is sensible and self-evident in you, then you have a sensible self-evident proof of the true God of life and light and love and goodness, as manifest to you as your own life. For with the same self-evident certainty as you know that you think and are alive, you know that there is goodness, love, benevolence, meekness, compassion, wisdom, peace, joy, etc. Now this is the self-evident God that forces Himself to be known and found and felt in every man in the same certainty of self-evidence as every man feels and finds his own thoughts and his own life. And this is the God Whose being

and providence, thus self-evident in us, call for our worship and love and adoration and obedience to Him. And this worship and love and adoration and conformity to the divine goodness is our belief in, and sure knowledge of, the self-evident God. And atheism is not the denial of a first omnipotent Cause, but is purely and solely nothing else but the disowning, forsaking, and renouncing the goodness, virtue, benevolence, and meekness of the Divine Nature that has made itself thus self-evident in us as the true object of our worship, conformity, love, and adoration. This is the one true God, or the Deity of goodness, virtue, and love; the certainty of Whose being and providence opens itself to you in the self-evident sensibility of your own nature, and inspires His likeness, and the love of His goodness into you. And as this is the only true knowledge that you can possibly have of God and the Divine Nature, so it is a knowledge not to be debated or lessened by any objections of reason, but is as self-evident as your own life. But to find or know God in reality by any outward proofs, or by anything but by God Himself made manifest and self-evident in you, will never be your case, either here or hereafter. For neither God, nor heaven, nor hell, nor the devil, nor the world, nor the flesh, can be any otherwise knowable in you or by you but by their own existence and manifestation in you. And all pretended knowledge of any of these things, beyond or without this self-evident sensibility of their birth within you, is only such knowledge of them as the blind man hath of that light that hath never entered into him.—[*The Way to Divine Knowledge*, p. 192.]

IS WILL TO ALL GOODNESS

GOD, as considered in Himself, in His holy being, before anything is brought forth by Him or out of Him, is only an eternal Will to all goodness. This is the one eternal, immutable God, that from eternity to eternity changes not, that can be neither more nor less nor anything else but an eternal Will to all the goodness that is in Himself and can come from Him. The

creation of ever so many worlds or systems of creatures adds nothing to, nor takes anything from, this immutable God. He always was and always will be the same immutable Will to all goodness. So that as certainly as He is the Creator, so certainly He is the Blesser of every created thing, and can give nothing but blessing, goodness, and happiness from Himself, because He has in Himself nothing else to give. It is much more possible for the sun to give forth darkness than for God to do, or be, or give forth anything but blessing and goodness.—[*The Spirit of Love*, p. 5.]

IS LOVE

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I thank you for the favour of yours. In the two extracts you have sent the writer says twice he cannot adopt the dark side of my system. If what I have wrote may be called a system, it has put a full end to all that was dark and partial in every other system. It makes all the universe both of nature and grace to be an edifice of love, kept up and governed by love, for I allow of no other God but Love, who from eternity to eternity can have no other will towards the creature but to communicate good; and that no creature can have any misery from which infinite goodness can[1] deliver it. Where then is the dark side? Must I assert God to be more than infinitely good? —Dear soul, adieu.—[*Letter* xiv.]

INFINITY OF MERE LOVE

THEOPHILUS.—My heart embraces you both with the greatest affection, and I am much pleased at the occasion of your coming, which calls me to the most delightful subject in the world:—to help both you and myself to rejoice in that adorable Deity, Whose infinite being is an infinity of mere love, an unbeginning, never-ceasing, and for ever overflowing ocean of meekness, sweetness, delight, blessing, goodness, patience, and mercy, and all

[1] There is a very able and interesting review of Canon Overton's *Life of Law* in the *Spectator* for April 9, 1881, and in the succeeding numbers there is a valuable series of letters to the editor discussing Law's use of this word and his meaning in the text.

this, as so many blessed streams breaking out of the Abyss of universal Love, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, a triune infinity of love and goodness, for ever and ever giving forth nothing but the same gifts of light and love, of blessing and joy, whether before or after the fall, either of angels or men.

Look at all nature, through all its height and depth, in all its variety of working powers, it is what it is for this only end that the hidden riches, the invisible powers, blessings, glory, and love of the unsearchable God, may become visible, sensible, and manifest in it and by it. Look at all the variety of creatures; they are what they are for this only end that, in their infinite variety, degrees, and capacities, they may be as so many speaking figures, living forms of the manifold riches and powers of nature, as so many sounds and voices, preachers and trumpets, giving glory and praise and thanksgiving to that Deity of Love which gives life to all nature and all creatures. For every creature of unfallen nature, call it by what name you will, has its form and power and state and place in nature for no other end but to open and enjoy, to manifest and rejoice in, some share of the love and happiness and goodness of the Deity, as springing forth in the boundless height and depth of nature.

Now this is the one will and work of God in and through all nature and creature. From eternity to eternity He can will and intend nothing towards them, in them, or by them, but the communication of various degrees of His own love, goodness, and happiness to them according to their state and place and capacity in nature. This is God's unchangeable disposition towards the creature; He can be nothing else but all goodness towards it, because He can be nothing towards the creature but that which He is and was and ever shall be in Himself. . . .

Eusebius.—Oh Theophilus! you have forced me now to speak, and I cannot contain the joy that I feel in this expectation which you have raised in me. If you can make the Scriptures do all that

which you have promised to Theogenes I shall be in paradise before I die. For to know that Love alone was the beginning of nature and creature, that nothing but Love encompasses the whole universe of things, that the governing hand that overrules all, the watchful eye that sees through all, is nothing but omnipotent and omniscient Love, using an infinity of wisdom to raise all that is fallen in nature, to save every misguided creature from the miserable works of its own hands, and to make happiness and glory the perpetual inheritance of all the creation, is a reflection that must be quite ravishing to every intelligent creature that is sensible of it. Thus to think of God, of providence, and of eternity, whilst we are in this valley and shadow of death, is to have a real foretaste of the blessings of the world to come. Pray, therefore, let us hear how the letter of Scripture is a proof of this God of Love. —[*The Spirit of Love*, Part II. p. 2.]

THE CAUSE OF CREATION

THE goodness of God breaking forth into a desire to communicate good was the cause and the beginning of the creation. Hence it follows that to all eternity God can have no thought or intent towards the creature but to communicate good, because He made the creature for this sole end, to receive good. The first motive towards the creature is unchangeable; it takes its rise from God's desire to communicate good, and it is an eternal impossibility that anything can ever come from God as His will and purpose towards the creature but that same love and goodness which first created it. He must always will that to it which He willed at the creation of it. This is the amiable nature of God. He is the Good—the unchangeable, overflowing Fountain of good—that sends forth nothing but good to all eternity. He is the Love itself,—the Unmixed, Unmeasurable Love,—doing nothing but from love, giving nothing but gifts of love to everything that He has made, requiring nothing of all His creatures but the spirit and fruits of that Love which brought them into being. Oh how sweet

is this contemplation of the height and depth of the riches of divine love! with what attraction must it draw every thoughtful man to return love for love to this overflowing Fountain of boundless goodness! What charms has that religion which discovers to us our existence in relation to, and dependence upon, this Ocean of divine love! View every part of our redemption, from Adam's first sin to the resurrection of the dead, and you will find nothing but successive mysteries of that first love which created angels and men. All the mysteries of the gospel are only so many marks and proofs of God's desiring to make His love triumph in the removal of sin and disorder from all nature and creature.—[*The Spirit of Prayer*, p. 29.]

HIS NAMES

ASK what God is? His name is Love; He is the good, the perfection, the peace, the joy, the glory, and the blessing of every life. Ask what Christ is? He is the universal Remedy of all evil broken forth in nature and creature. He is the Destruction of misery, sin, darkness, death, and hell. He is the Resurrection and Life of all fallen nature. He is the unwearied Compassion, the long-suffering Pity, the never-ceasing Mercifulness of God to every want and infirmity of human nature. He is the Breathing forth of the heart, life, and spirit of God, into all the dead race of Adam. He is the Seeker, the Finder, the Restorer of all that was lost and dead to the life of God. He is the Love that from Cain to the end of time prays for all its murderers, the Love that willingly suffers and dies among thieves that thieves may have a life with Him in paradise; the Love that visits publicans, harlots, and sinners, and wants and seeks to forgive where most is to be forgiven. . . .

Oh Humanus, love is my bait; you must be caught by it; it will put its hook into your heart, and will force you to know that of all strong things nothing is so strong, so irresistible, as Divine Love.—[*The Spirit of Prayer*, Part II. p. 127.]

THE TRINITY

WILL or desire in the Deity is justly considered as God the Father, Who from eternity to eternity wills or generates only the Son, from which eternal generating the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds. And this is the infinite perfection or fulness of beatitude of the life of the Triune God. . . . And here lies the ground of that plain and most fundamental doctrine of Scripture, that the Father is the Creator, the Son the Regenerator, and the Holy Spirit the Sanctifier. For what is this but saying in the plainest manner that as there are Three in God, so there must be three in the creature; that as the Three stand related to one another in God, so they must stand in the same relation in the creature. For, if a threefold life of God must have distinct shares in the creation, blessing, and perfection of man, is not that a demonstration that the life of man must stand in the same threefold state and have such a trinity in it as has its true likeness to that Trinity which is in God? . . . It has been already observed that when man was created in his original perfection the Holy Trinity was his Creator; but when man was fallen and had lost his first divine life, then there began a new language of a redeeming religion. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, were now to be considered, not as creating every man as they created the first man, but as differently concerned in raising the fallen race of mankind to that first likeness of the Holy Trinity, in which their first father was created. Hence it is that the Scriptures speak of the Father as drawing and calling men, because the desire which is from the Father's nature must be the first mover, stirrer, and beginner. . . . The

TRINITY IN GOD

AND IN MAN

Son of God is now considered as the Regenerator or Raiser of a new birth in us, because He enters a second time into the life of the soul in order that His own nature and likeness may be again generated in it, and that He may be that to the soul in its state which He is to the Father in the Deity. The Holy Ghost is represented as the Sanctifier or Finisher of the divine life restored in us because, as in the Deity the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son as the amiable blessed Finisher of the triune life of God, so the fallen nature of man cannot be raised out of its unholy state, cannot be blessed and sanctified with its true degree of the divine life, till the Holy Spirit arises up in it.

THE DOCTRINE WHOLLY PRACTICAL

The doctrine of the Holy Trinity is thus wholly practical; it is revealed to us to discover our high original and the greatness of our fall, to show us the deep and profound operation of the Triune God in the recovery of the divine life in our souls, that by the means of this mystery thus discovered our piety may be rightly directed, our faith and prayer have their proper objects; that the workings and aspirings of our own hearts may co-operate and correspond with that triune life in the Deity which is always desiring to manifest itself in us. For as everything that is in us, whether it be heaven or hell, rises up in us by a birth and is generated in us by the will-spirit of our souls, which kindles itself either in heaven or hell, so this mystery of a Triune Deity manifesting itself as a Father creating, a Son or Word regenerating, and a Holy Spirit sanctifying us, is not to entertain our speculation with dry metaphysical distinctions of the Deity, but to show us from what a height and depth we are fallen, and to excite such a prayer and faith, such a hungering and thirsting after this Triune Fountain of all good, as may help to generate and bring forth in us that first image of the Holy Trinity in which we were created and which must be born in us before we can enter into the state of the blessed. . . . It is this eternal unbeginning Trinity in Unity of Fire, Light, and Spirit, that constitutes Eternal Nature, the Kingdom of

Heaven, the heavenly Jerusalem, the Divine Life, the beatific Visibility, the majestic Glory and Presence of God. Through this Kingdom of Heaven, or Eternal Nature, is the invisible God, the incomprehensible Trinity eternally breaking forth and manifesting itself in a boundless height and depth of blissful wonders, opening and displaying itself to all its creatures in an infinite variation and endless multiplicity of its powers, beauties, joys, and glories. So that all the inhabitants of heaven are for ever knowing, seeing, hearing, feeling, and variously enjoying all that is great, amiable, infinite, and glorious in the Divine Nature.—[*An Appeal to all that Doubt*, p. 34.]

THE UNSEEN UNIVERSE

THE INVISIBLE THINGS OF GOD

THAT this outward world was not created out of nothing is plainly taught by St. Paul, who declares that the creation of the world is out of the invisible things of God; so that the outward condition and frame of visible nature is a plain manifestation of that spiritual world from whence it is descended. Heaven itself is nothing else but the first glorious Out-birth, the majestic Manifestation, the beatific Visibility, of the one God in Trinity.—[*An Appeal, etc.*, p. 21.]

ALL THINGS OUT OF

OUT of this transcendent Eternal Nature, which is as universal and immense as the Deity itself, do all the highest beings, cherubims and seraphims, all the hosts of angels, and all intelligent spirits, receive their birth, existence, substance, and form. They are all so many different, finite, bounded forms of the heavenly fire and light of Eternal Nature, into which creaturely beings the invisible Triune God breathes His invisible Spirit, by which they become both the true children and likeness of the invisible Deity, and also the true offspring of His Eternal Nature, and are fitted to rejoice with God, to live in the Life of God, and have their being in that Eternal Nature or Kingdom of Heaven, in which the Deity itself liveth and worketh. And they are one, and united in one, God in them, and they in God, according to the prayer of Christ for His disciples, that they, and He, and His Holy Father might be united in one.—[*The Way to Divine Knowledge*, p. 117.]

NATURE

GOD, NATURE, AND CREATURE

NATURE itself is a birth from God; it is the first manifestation of the hidden inconceivable God, and it is so far from being out of nothing that it is the manifestation of all that in God which was before unmanifest. As nature is the first birth or manifestation of God or discovery of the Divine Powers, so all creatures are the manifestation of the powers of nature brought into a variety of births by the Will of God out of nature. The first creatures that are the nearest to the Deity are out of the highest powers of nature, God willing that nature should be manifested in the rise and birth of creatures out of it. Nature, directed and governed by the Wisdom of God, goes on in the birth of one thing out of another.—[*The Spirit of Prayer*, Part II. p. 56.]

ALL beings that are purely of this world have their existence in, and dependence upon, temporal Nature. God is no Maker, Creator, or Governor of any being or creature of this world, immediately or by Himself, but He creates, upholds, and governs all things of this world, by, and through, and with temporal Nature. As temporal Nature is nothing else but Eternal Nature separated, divided, compacted, made visible, and changeable for a time, so heaven is nothing else but the beatific visibility, the majestic presence of the Abyssal, Unsearchable, Triune God. It is that light with which, as the Scripture saith, God is decked as with a garment, and by which He is manifested and made visible to heavenly eyes and beings; for Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as they are the Triune God, deeper than the Kingdom of Heaven or

Eternal Nature, are invisible to all created eyes. But that beatific visibility and outward glory which is called the Kingdom of Heaven is the Manifestation of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in, and by, and through the glorious Union of eternal Fire, and Light, and Spirit.—[*An Appeal, etc.*, p. 147.]

BEFORE or without Nature the Deity is an entirely hidden, shut up, unknown, and unknowable Abyss. For nature is the only ground or beginning of something; there is neither this nor that, no ground for conception, no possibility of distinction or difference; there cannot be a creature to think, nor anything to be thought upon, till nature is in existence. For all the properties of sensibility and sensible life, every mode and manner of existence, all seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, feeling, all inclinations, passions, and sensations of joy, sorrow, pain, pleasure, are not in God, but in nature. And, therefore, God is not knowable, not a thought can begin about Him, till He manifests Himself in, and through, and by the existence of nature; that is, till there is something that can be seen, understood, distinguished, felt. And this is Eternal Nature, or the Out-birth of the Deity called the Kingdom of Heaven, viz., an infinity or boundless opening of the Properties, Powers, Wonders, and Glories of the hidden Deity, and this not once done, but ever doing, ever standing in the same Birth, for ever and ever breaking forth and springing up in new forms and openings of the abyssal Deity in the powers of nature. And out of this ocean of manifested powers of nature the Will of the Deity created hosts of heavenly beings, full of the heavenly wonders introduced into a participation of the Infinity of God, to live in an eternal succession of heavenly sensations, to see and feel, to taste and find new forms of delight in an inexhaustible source of ever-changing and never-ceasing wonders of the Divine Glory.

Oh Theogenes! What an eternity is this, out of which and for which thy eternal soul was created! What little crawling things

are all that an earthly ambition can set before thee! Bear with patience for a while the rags of thy earthly nature, the veil and darkness of flesh and blood, as the lot of thy inheritance from father Adam, but think nothing worth a thought but that which will bring thee back to thy first glory and land thee safe in the region of eternity.—[*The Spirit of Love*, Part II. p. 62.]

TRUE RELIGION NATURAL

A RELIGION that is not founded in nature is all fiction and falsity and as mere a nothing as an idol. For as no creature can be or have anything it has but what it is and has from the nature of things, nor have anything done to it, good or harm, but according to the unalterable workings of nature, so no religion can be of any service but that which works with and according to the demands of nature. Nor can any fallen creature be raised out of its fallen state even by the Omnipotence of God, but according to the nature of things, or the unchangeable powers of nature; for nature is the opening and manifestation of the Divine Omnipotence; it is God's Power-World; and therefore all that God does, is and must be done in and by the powers of nature. . . . Right and wrong, good and evil, true and false, happiness and misery, are as unchangeable in nature as time and space. And every state and quality that is creaturely, or that can belong to any creature, has its own nature as unchangeably as time and space have theirs. Nothing therefore can be done to any creature supernaturally, or in a way that is without or contrary to the powers of nature; but every thing or creature that is to be helped, that is to have any good done to it, or any evil taken out of it, can only have it done so far as the powers of nature are able and rightly directed to effect it. And this is the true ground of all Divine revelation, and of all that help which the supernatural Deity vouchsafes to the fallen state of man. It is not to appoint an arbitrary system of religious homage to God, but solely to point out, and provide for man, blinded by his fallen state, that one only religion, that according to

the nature of things can possibly restore to him his lost perfection. This is the truth, the goodness, and the necessity of the Christian religion; it is true, and good, and necessary, because it is as much the one only natural and possible way of overcoming all the evil of fallen man as light is the only natural possible thing that can expel darkness.

And therefore it is that all the mysteries of the gospel, however high, are yet true and necessary parts of the one religion of nature, because they are no higher, nor otherwise, than the natural state of fallen man absolutely stands in need of. His nature cannot be helped or raised out of the evils of its present state by anything less than these mysteries, and therefore they are in the same truth and justness to be called his natural religion as that remedy which alone has full power to remove all the evil of a disease may be justly called its natural remedy. For a religion is not to be deemed natural because it has nothing to do with revelation, but then is it the one true religion of nature when it has everything in it that our natural state stands in need of, everything that can help us out of our present evil and raise and exalt us to all the happiness which our nature is capable of having. Supposing therefore the Christian scheme of redemption to be all that and nothing else in itself but that which the nature of things absolutely require it to be, it must, for that very reason, have its mysteries. —[*The Spirit of Love,* Part II. p. 135.]

THE BREATH OF GOD

THE SOUL OF MAN THE BREATH OF GOD

IT has been an opinion commonly received, though without any foundation in the light of nature or Scripture, that God created this whole visible world and all things in it out of nothing; nay, that the souls of men and the highest orders of beings were created in the same manner. The Scripture is very decisive against this origin of the souls of men. For Moses saith that God breathed into man the breath of life, and man became a living soul. Here the notion of a soul created out of nothing is in the plainest, strongest manner rejected by the first written word of God, and no Jew or Christian can have the least excuse for falling into such an error. Here the highest and most divine original is not darkly, but openly, absolutely, and in the strongest form of expression ascribed to the soul. It came forth as a breath of life out from the mouth of God, and therefore did not come out of the womb of nothing, but is what it is, and has what it has in itself, from and out of the first and highest of all beings.—[*An Appeal, etc.*, p. 1.]

WE are all of us by birth the offspring of God, more nearly related to Him than we are to one another; for in Him we live, and move, and have our being. The first man that was brought forth from God had the Breath and Spirit of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost breathed into him, and so he became a living soul. Thus was our first father born of God, descended from Him, and stood in paradise in the image and likeness of God. He was the image and likeness of God, not with any regard to his outward shape or form, for no shape has any likeness to God; but he was in the

image and likeness of God because the Holy Trinity had breathed their own Nature and Spirit into him. And as the Deity, Father. Son, and Holy Spirit, are always in heaven, and make heaven to be everywhere, so this Spirit, breathed by Them into man, brought heaven into man along with it, and so man was in heaven as well as on earth, that is, in paradise, which signifies an heavenly state or birth of life.—[*The Spirit of Prayer*, p. 6.]

THE GUARANTEE OF IMMORTALITY

HEREIN also appears the high dignity and never-ceasing perpetuity of our nature. The essences of our souls can never cease to be, because they never began to be, and nothing can live eternally but that which hath lived from all eternity. The essences of our soul were a breath in God before they became a living soul; they lived in God before they lived in the created soul, and therefore the soul is a partaker of the eternity of God, and can never cease to be. Here, O Man, behold the great original, and the high state of thy birth. Here let all that is within thee praise thy God who has brought thee into so high a state of being, who has given thee powers as eternal and boundless as His own attributes, that there might be no end or limit of thy happiness in Him. Thou begannest as time began, but as time was in eternity before it became days and years, so thou wast in God before thou wast brought into the creation. And as time is neither a part of eternity nor broken off from it, yet has come out of it, so thou art not a part of God, nor broken off from Him, yet born out of Him. Thou shouldst only will that which God willeth, only love that which He loveth, co-operate and unite with Him in the whole form of thy life, because all that thou art, all that thou hast, is only a spark of His own Life and Spirit derived into thee. If thou desirest, inclinest, and turnest to God as the flowers of the field desire and turn towards the sun, all the Blessings of the Deity will spring up in thee; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost will make their abode with thee. If thou turnest in towards thyself to live

to thyself, to be happy in the workings of an own will, to be rich in the sharpness and acuteness of thy own reason, thou choosest to be a weed, and canst only have such a life, spirit, and blessing from God, as a thistle has from the sun.—[*An Appeal, etc.*, p. 10.]

GOD IN MAN

IN HIM WE LIVE

OUR natural life is preserved by some union with God, Who is the Fountain of Life to all the creation, to which union we are altogether strangers. We find that we are alive, as we find that we think; but how, or by what influence from God our life is supported, is a secret into which we cannot enter. It is the same thing with relation to our spiritual life; it arises from some invisible union with God, or some Divine influence, which, in this state of life, we cannot comprehend. Our blessed Saviour saith: 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.' This shows us how ignorant we are of the manner of the operations of the Holy Spirit; we may feel its effects as we may perceive the effects of the wind, but we are as much strangers to its manner of coming upon us as we are strangers to that exact point from whence the wind begins to blow, and where it will cease.—[*Christian Perfection*, p. 248.]

WE ARE COMPLETE IN HIM

POOR and miserable as this life is, we have all of us free access to all that is great, and good, and happy, and carry within ourselves a key to all the treasures that heaven has to bestow upon us. We starve in the midst of plenty, groan under infirmities with the remedy in our own hand, live and die without knowing and feeling anything of the One only Good, whilst we have it in our power to know and enjoy it in as great a reality as we know and feel the power of this world over us. For heaven is as near to our souls as this world is to our bodies; and we are created,

we are redeemed, to have our conversation in it. God, the only Good of all intelligent natures, is not an absent or distant God, but is more present in and to our souls than our own bodies; and we are strangers to heaven and without God in the world, for this only reason, because we are void of that spirit of prayer which alone can unite, and never fails to unite us with the One only Good, and to open heaven and the kingdom of God within us. A root set in the finest soil, in the best climate, and blessed with all that sun, and air, and rain can do for it, is not in so sure a way of its growth to perfection as every man may be whose spirit aspires after all that which God is ready and infinitely desirous to give him. For the sun meets not the springing bud that stretches towards him with half that certainty as God, the Source of all good, communicates Himself to the soul that longs to partake of Him.—[*The Spirit of Prayer*, p. 5.]

THE SOUL OF MAN THE WITNESS OF GOD

NOW, that this form of a Divine Life is in every man, and that no man is without this witness of God in himself, is a truth as evident as anything that can be affirmed of human nature. For was not God in man as a Principle of life, and man in God as a birth of Him, and in Him, or, in Scripture words, did he not live, and move, and have his being in God, he could no more begin to form a thought of inquiry after God, or have the least desire of knowing anything about Him, than the worms in the earth can begin to hunger after the power of syllogisms, and crawl about in quest of them. But as all instincts, appetites, and inclinations are, and can be nothing else, but the various workings of that kind of life which is in the animal, so the cares, fears, hopes, and suchlike relating to God, and inseparable from man, are, and can be nothing else, but the various workings of a life and power of God essentially existing as a birth in the soul of man.—[*A Short Confutation*, p. 92.]

THE SOUL OF MAN THE SEAT OF GOD

NOW, that which we are here taught is the whole end of all Scripture; for all that is there said, however learnedly read or studied by Hebrew or Greek skill, fails of its only end till it leads and brings us to an Essential God within us, to feel and find all that which the Scriptures speak of God, of man, of life and death, of good and evil, of heaven and hell, as essentially verified in our own souls. For all is within man that can be either good or evil to him. God within him is his Divine Life, his Divine Light, and his Divine Love. Satan within him is his life of self, of earthly wisdom, of diabolical falseness, wrath, pride, and vanity of every kind. There is no middle way between these two. He that is not under the power of the one is under the power of the other. —[*An Address to the Clergy*, p. 39.]

THE ORIGIN OF EVIL

THE RISE OF EVIL IN THE WILL OF MAN

GOD is all Good, and everything that comes out from Him as His creature, product, or offspring, must come forth in that state of goodness which it had in Him; and every creature, however high in its birth from God, must in the beginning of its life have a power of joining with or departing from God; because the beginning of its life is nothing else but the beginning of its own self-motion as a creature, and therefore no creature can have its state or condition fixed till it gives itself up either wholly unto God or turns wholly from Him; for if it is an intelligent creature it can only be so by having the intelligent Will of God derived into it, or made creaturely in it; but the intelligent Will brought into a creaturely form must be that which it was in the Creator, and therefore must be the same self-existent and self-moving power that it was before it became creaturely in any angel or spirit. And thus the cause and origin of evil, wherever it is, is absolutely and eternally separated from God.—[*An Appeal, etc.*, p. 61.]

IF a delicious fragrant fruit had a power of separating itself from that rich spirit, fine taste, smell, and colour, which it receives from the virtue of the sun and the spirit of the air, or if it could in the beginning of its growth turn away from the sun and receive no virtue from it, then it would stand in its own first birth of wrath, sourness, bitterness, and astringency, just as the devils do who have turned back into their own dark root and have rejected the

Light and Spirit of God. So that the hellish nature of a devil is nothing else but its own first forms of life withdrawn or separated from the heavenly light and love; just as the sourness, astringency, and bitterness of a fruit are nothing else but the first forms of its own vegetable life, before it has reached the virtue of the sun and the spirit of the air. And as a fruit, if it had a sensibility of itself, would be full of torment as soon as it was shut up in the first forms of its life, in its own astringency, sourness, and stinging bitterness, so the angels when they had turned back into these very same first forms of their own life, and broke off from the Heavenly Light and Love of God, became their own hell. No hell was made for them, no new qualities came into them, no vengeance or pains from the God of Love fell upon them: they only stood in that state of division and separation from the Son and Holy Spirit of God which by their own motion they had made for themselves. They had nothing in them but what they had from God, the first forms of an heavenly life: nothing but what the most heavenly beings have and must have to all eternity; but they had them in a state of self-torment, because they had separated them from that birth of light and love, which alone could make them glorious sons and blessed images of the Holy Trinity.—[*An Appeal, etc.*, p. 28.]

THE DESIRE OF MANY PROPHETS AND RIGHTEOUS MEN

HOW was the philosophy of the ancient sages perplexed with the state of nature! They knew God to be all Goodness, Love, and Perfection, and so knew not what to do with the misery of human life, and the disorders of outward nature, because they knew not how this nature came into its present state or from whence it was descended. But had they known that temporal nature, all that we see in this whole frame of things, was only the sickly defiled state of eternal things put into a temporary state of recovery, that time and all transitory things were only in this war and strife to be finally delivered from all the evil that was brought

into eternal nature, their hearts must have praised God for this creation of things as those morning stars did that shouted for joy when it was first brought forth.—[*An Appeal, etc.*, p. 127.]

AN EVIL WILL AN UNDYING WORM

HERE we see the plain and true original of all evil without any perplexity or imputation upon God; that evil is nothing else but the wrath, and fire, and darkness of nature broken off from God; that the punishment, the pain, or the hell of sin, is no designedly prepared or arbitrary penalty inflicted by God, but the natural and necessary state of the creature that leaves or turns from God. The will of the creature is the only opener of all evil or good in the creature; the will stands between God and nature, and must in all its workings unite either with God or nature. The will totally resigned and given up to God is one spirit with God and God dwelleth in it; the will turned from God is taken prisoner in the wrath, fire, and darkness of nature. Here we see also how and why a creature can lose and die to all its happiness and perfection, and from a beauteous angel become a deformed devil. It is because nature has no beauty, happiness, or perfection, but solely from the manifestation or birth of the Holy Trinity in it. God manifested in nature is the only blessing, happiness, and perfection of nature. Therefore the creature that in the working of its will is turned from God must have as great a change brought forth in it as that of heaven into hell, forced to live, but to have no other life but that of its own gnawing worm, left to itself. Hence we also see the deep ground and absolute necessity of the Christian redemption by a birth from above of the Light and Spirit of God, demonstrated in the most absolute degree of certainty. It is because all nature is in itself nothing but a hungry wrathful fire of life, a tormenting darkness, unless the Light and Spirit of God kindle it into a kingdom of heaven. And therefore the fallen soul can have no possible relief or redemption, it must be to all eternity a hungry, dark, fiery, tor-

menting spirit of life, unless the Light, or Son, and Spirit of God be born again in it. Hence also it follows that in all the possibility of things there is and can be but one happiness and one misery. The one misery is nature and creature left to itself; the one happiness is the Life, the Light, the Spirit of God, manifested in nature and creature. This is the true meaning of those words of our Lord, there is but One that is good, and that is God. —[*The Spirit of Prayer,* Part II. p. 33.]

THE FALL

THEOPHILUS.—Let me now only ask you how you would endeavour to convince a man of his fallen state? STATE OF HEART

HUMANUS.—I would not begin with the account that Moses gives of it, for several reasons; but chiefly for these two—First, Because the fall is not an historical matter; nor would a mere historical knowledge of it be of any use or do any real good to him. Secondly, Because Moses' account is not the proof of the fall, and therefore not to be appealed to as such. Moses is the first historian of natural death, and has recorded the death of the first man and of many others who were born of him. But the proof that man is mortal lies not in Moses' history of the death of the first man, but in the known nature of man and of the world from which he has his life. Again, we do not want Moses to assure us that there was a first man, and that he had something from Heaven and something from the Earth in him, and must have come into the world in another manner than all those who have descended from him. For every man is himself the infallible proof of this. Moses is only the historian that has recorded the when, and where, and how this first man came into the world, and what was his name. But the proof and certainty of the fact that such a first man there must have been lies not in Moses' account, but stands proved to every man from his own nature and state in this world. Thus it is with the fall; we have no more occasion to go to Moses to prove that man and the world are in a fallen state than to prove that man is a poor, miserable, weak, vain, distressed, corrupt, depraved, selfish, self-tormenting, perishing creature; and that the world is a sad mixture of false goods and real evils; a mere scene

PROOF OF FALL

of all sorts of trials, vexations, and miseries; all arising from the frame, and nature, and condition both of man and the world. This is the full infallible proof of the fall of man which is not a thing learnt from any history, but shews itself everywhere and every day with such clearness as we see the sun. Moses is not the prover of the fact that man is fallen, but the recorder of the when and the how, and the manner in which the fall hath happened. My first attempt therefore upon any man to convince him of the fall as the ground of the redemption should be an attempt to do that for him which affliction, disappointments, sickness, pain, and the approach of death have a natural tendency to do; viz., to convince him of the vanity, poverty, and misery of his life and condition in this world. For as this is the true proof of the fallen state of man, so man can only be convinced of it by having this proof truly set before him. I would therefore appeal at first to nothing but his own nature and condition in the world, and shew him how unreasonable, nay, impossible it is, that a God who has nothing in Himself but infinite goodness and infinite happiness should bring forth a race of intelligent creatures that have neither natural goodness nor natural happiness. The inspired saints of God say thus, Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. Again, Man walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain. Now, if what is here truly said of mankind could be truly said of any order of the beasts and animals of the field, who could defend the goodness of God in bringing such creatures into such a state of life? Now, though the deist rejects the Scriptures considered as a volume of Divine revelation, yet everything that he outwardly sees, and inwardly feels, demonstrates this capital truth of Scripture that man is in this poor and miserable state of life. And therefore, everything that we know of God, and everything that we know of man, is a daily irresistible proof that man is in a fallen state.—[*The Way to Divine Knowledge*, p. 48.]

BUT I will end this matter with these borrowed words, 'We were no more created to be in the sorrows, burdens, and anguish of an earthly life than the angels were created to be in the wrath and darkness of hell. It is as contrary to the will and goodness of God towards us that we are out of paradise, as it is contrary to the designs and goodness of God towards the angels that some of them are out of heaven, prisoners of darkness. The grossness, impurity, sickness, pain, and corruption of our bodies are brought upon us by ourselves, in the same manner as the hideous, serpentine forms of the devils are brought upon them. How absurd and even blasphemous would it be to say with the Scripture and the Church that we are the children of wrath and born in sin, if we had that nature which God at first gave us? What a reproach upon God to say that this world is a valley of misery, a shadow of death, full of disorders, snares, evils, and temptations, if this was an original creation, or that state of things for which God created us? Is it not as consistent with the goodness and perfection of God to speak of the misery and disorder that unfallen angels find above, and of the vanity, emptiness, and sorrow of their heavenly state, as to speak of the misery of men and the sorrows of this world if men and the world were in that order in which God at first had placed them? If God could make any place poor and vain and create any beings into a state of vanity and vexation of spirit, He might do so in all places and to all beings.'—[*The Way to Divine Knowledge*, p. 48.]

O ISRAEL, THOU HAST DESTROYED THYSELF

I WOULD as soon send you on a pilgrimage to be a penitent as propose to you this travel to be a Christian. The truth of the Gospel lies much nearer to us than we imagine, and we only dispute and wrangle ourselves into a distance from it. Do you think that you need many books to shew you that you are a sinner; that you have the disorder of almost all the beasts within you; that you have, besides this, such passions and tempers of pride,

SEEMING WORTH CLOAKING CORRUPTION

envy, selfishness, and malice, as would make you shun the sight of other people, if they could see all that passes within you? Need any learning instruct you that at the same time that you have all these disorders both of the beasts and evil spirits within you, you have a great desire to seem to be without them, and are affecting continually to have and appear in those very virtues which you feel the want of? When you are full of hatred and envy, you affect to be thought good and good-natured; when proud, to appear as humble. Now I desire you to know no books but this book of your own heart, nor to be well read in any controversy but in that which passes within you, in order to know the Gospel to be the greatest of all truths and the infallible voice of God speaking the way of salvation to you. No echo answers to the voice that raises it so certainly and agreeably as the voice of nature or the state of your own heart answers to that which the gospel preaches unto you. And this I will shew you to be the shortest and surest of all methods to discover the truth of the Gospel.—[*A Demonstration, etc.*, p. 238.]

DEEP CALLETH TO DEEP

THE whole nature of the Christian religion stands upon these two great pillars, namely, the greatness of our fall and the greatness of our redemption. In the full and true knowledge of these truths lie all the reasons of a deep humility, penitence, and self-denial, and also all the motives and incitements to a most hearty, sincere, and total conversion to God. And every one is necessarily more or less of a true penitent, and more or less truly converted to God, according as he is more or less deeply and inwardly sensible of these truths. And till these two great truths have awakened and opened our minds for the full reception of the divine light, all reformation and pretence to amendment is but a dead and superficial thing, a mere garment of hypocrisy to hide us from ourselves and others. Nothing can truly awaken a sinner but a true sense of the deep inward possession and power that sin has in him. When he sees that sin

begins with his being, that it rises up in the essences of his nature, and lives in the first forms of his life, and that he lies thus chained and barred up in the very jaws of death and hell, as unable to alter his own state as to create another creature; when along with this knowledge he sees that the free grace of God has provided him a remedy equal to his distress, that He has given him the holy blood and life of Jesus Christ, the true Son of God, to enter as deep into his soul as sin has entered, to change the first forms and essences of his life and bring forth in them a new birth of a divine nature which is to be an immortal image of the Holy Trinity, everlastingly safe, blessed, and enriched in the bosom of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; when a man once truly knows and feels these two truths, he may be said truly to know and feel so much of the power of Christ brought to life in him. And there seems to be no more that you need do outwardly for him. The voice of his inward Teacher is so ever speaking, so ever heard and loved within him, that you can say nothing to him outwardly of any humility, penitence, or self-abasement, but what is less than his own wounded heart suggests to him. Humility can only be feigned or false before this conviction. He can now no more take any degree of good to himself than assume any share in the creation of angels, and all pride or self-esteem of any kind seems to him to contain as great a lie in it as if he was to say that he helped to create himself. You need not tell him that he must turn unto God with all his strength, with all his heart, with all his soul, and all his spirit, for all that he can offer unto God seems to him already less than the least of His mercies towards him. He has so seen the exceeding Love of God in the manner and degree of his redemption that it would be the greatest of pain to him to do anything but upon a motive of Divine Love. As his soul has found God to be all Love, so it has but one desire, and that is to be itself all love of God. This is the conviction and conversion that necessarily arise from a full inward sensibility of these

truths; the soul is thereby wholly consecrated to God, and can like, or love, or do nothing, but what it can, some way or other, turn into a service of love towards Him. But where the weight and power of these truths is not livingly felt in the heart, then it is not to be wondered at if religion has no root that is able to bring forth its proper fruits. And if the generality of Christians are a number of dead superficial consenters to the history of Scripture doctrines, as unwilling to have the spirit as to part with the form of their religion, loth to hear of any kind of self-denial, fond of worldly ease, indulgence, and riches, unwilling to be called to the perfection of the Gospel, professing and practising religion merely as the fashion and custom of the place they are in require; if some rest in outward forms of religion, others in certain orthodoxy of opinions; if some expect to be saved by the goodness of the sect they are of, others by a certain change of their outward behaviour; if some content themselves with a lukewarm spirit, and others depend upon their own works, these are delusions that must happen to those who do not know and feel in some good degree the true nature of their own fallen soul, and what a kind of regeneration can alone save them. But all these errors, delusions, and false rests are cut up by the root as soon as a man knows the true reason and necessity of his wanting so great a Saviour. For he that knows the ground and essences of his soul to be so many essences of sin, which form sin, as they form his life, entirely incapable of producing any good till a birth from God has arisen in them; such a one can neither place his redemption where it is not, nor seek it coolly and negligently where it is. For knowing that it is the hell within his own nature that only wants to be destroyed, he is intent only upon bringing destruction upon that, and this secures him from false religion. And knowing that this inward hell cannot be destroyed unless God becomes his Redeemer or Regenerator in the ground of his soul, this makes him believe all, expect all, and hope all from his

Saviour, Jesus Christ, alone. And knowing that all this redemption, or salvation, is to be brought about in the inmost ground and depth of his heart, this makes him always apply to God as the God of his heart, and therefore what he offers to God is his own heart, and this keeps him always spiritually alive, wholly employed and intent upon the true work of religion, the fitting and preparing his heart for all the operations of God's Holy Spirit upon it. And so he is a true inward Christian who, as our blessed Lord speaks, has the kingdom of God within him, where the state and habit of his heart continually, thankfully, worships the Father in spirit and in truth.—[*Christian Regeneration*, p. 56.]

COILED ROUND HIS HEART A DEMON DIRE

NOW, though the light and comfort of this outward world keeps even the worst of men from any constant, strong sensibility of that wrathful, fiery, dark, and self-tormenting nature that is the very essence of every fallen unregenerate soul, yet every man in the world has, more or less, frequent and strong intimations given him, that so it is with him in the inmost ground of his soul. How many inventions are some people forced to have recourse to in order to keep off a certain inward uneasiness which they are afraid of, and know not whence it comes? Alas, 'tis because there is a fallen spirit, a dark aching fire within them, which has never had its proper relief, and is trying to discover itself, and calling out for help at every cessation of worldly joy.

Why are some people, when under heavy disappointments or some great worldly shame, at the very brink of distraction, unable to bear themselves, and desirous of death of any kind? 'Tis because worldly light and comforts no longer acting sweetly upon the blood, the soul is left to its own dark, fiery, raging nature, and would destroy the body at any rate, rather than continue under such a sensibility of its own wrathful, self-tormenting fire. Who has not at one time or other felt a sourness, a wrath, a selfishness, an envy, and a pride, which he could not tell what to

do with or how to bear, rising up in him without his consent, casting a blackness over all his thoughts, and then as suddenly going off again, either by the cheerfulness of the sun or air, or some agreeable accident, and again at times as suddenly returning upon him? Sufficient indications are these to every man that there is a dark guest within him, concealed under the cover of flesh and blood, often lulled asleep by worldly light and amusements, yet such as will, in spite of everything, shew itself, and which, if it has not its proper relief in this life, must be his torment in eternity. And it was for the sake of this hidden hell within us that our blessed Lord said when on earth, and says now to every soul, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'—[*Christian Regeneration*, p. 12.]

HIS WHOLE ESSENCE SHATTERED AND UNSOUND

THE condition in which I have represented our soul to be by the fall, a mere fire-breath of an hellish nature shewing itself in every man more or less by its fruits, by such eruptions and breakings forth of dark passions, but hiding itself under an outward appearance of good and a feigned civility or rectitude of manners, is what every man must be forced to own to be more or less in himself. For this is the state of every man's soul, because it has lost the birth of the Son of God in it, and so is only as a strong root of a fiery life, unenlightened, and unblessed by that holy Word which is the brightness of the Father's glory. This dark root of a fiery, self-tormenting life, which is the whole nature of the fallen soul, destitute of the birth of the Son of God in it, is a life that subsists in four elements, as the life of this world hath its four elements. Now the four elements of this dark, fiery soul or fallen nature are: a restless selfishness, a restless envy, a restless pride, and a restless wrath or anger. I call them the elements of the fallen soul because they are that to it which the four elements of this world are to the life of the body. Now these four elements which nourish and keep up the

life of the fallen soul are also the four elements of hell in which the devils dwell; they can no more depart from, or exist out of, these elements than an earthly life can depart from or exist without the four elements of this world, fire, air, water, and earth.

Could we see, as we see outward objects, what a dreadful misery these four elements bring upon our souls, we should shun and fly from everything that gave life and strength to them with more earnestness than from the most violent evils that could threaten our bodies. We should choose to burn in any fire rather than in that of our own wrath and pride; any poverty of outward life rather than that of our own pinching envy; any prison rather than to be shut up in our own dark selfishness. For all outward fires, chains, torments, slaveries, poverties, are but transient shadows of the tormenting, fiery, dark slavery of an unredeemed soul left and given up to these four elements of hell. And the reason why they are not a hell to profligate men now upon earth is, as has been said, because we now live in flesh and blood under the cheering influences of the sun, and the diversion and amusement of outward things, and in several forms of happiness which our imaginations play with in time. This wandering of the imagination through its own inventions of delight hinders the poor soul from feeling what it is, in its own nature, and therefore, though ever so much a slave of these elements, it only feels or perceives the torment of them by fits and on certain occasions. And yet sometimes it is seen that one or other of these elements awakens so violently as to become intolerable, and to give a true and plain foretaste of the condition and nature of hell in the soul that feels it.

Here again, I cannot help observing, by the bye, the wondrous excellence and divine nature of the gospel religion, which knowing our fall to consist in this darkened fire of the soul dwelling in these elements of hell, has set before us such amazing representations

of humility, meekness, and universal love, as the imagination of man could never have thought of, namely, the humility, meekness, and lowliness of the Son of God, who left His glory to take upon Him the form of a servant for our sakes; the great love of God towards us sinners in giving His only begotten Son to redeem us, and the love of God the Son in laying His life down for us, that we might imitate this amazing humility, meekness, and divine love, and love one another as He has loved us. These are mysteries of love and mercy that are set before us to quench the fiery wrath of our fallen nature, and to compel us, if possible, to abhor our own dark passions, and in humility and meekness become lovers of God and one another.—[*Christian Regeneration*, p. 35.]

THE WRATH OF GOD

NOW, after these two falls of two orders of creatures, the Deity itself came to have new and strange names, new and unheard-of tempers and inclinations of wrath, fury, and vengeance ascribed to it. I call them new because they began at the fall; I call them strange because they were foreign to the Deity, and could not belong to God in Himself. Thus God is in the Scriptures said to be a Consuming Fire. But to whom? To the fallen angels and to lost souls. But why and how is He so to them? It is because those creatures have lost all that they had from God but fire, and therefore God can only be found and manifested in them as a Consuming Fire. Now, is it not justly said that God, Who is nothing but Infinite Love, is yet in such creatures only a Consuming Fire, and that though God be nothing but Love, yet they are under the wrath and vengeance of God, because they have only that fire in them which is broken off from the light and love of God, and so can know or feel nothing of God but His fire in them? As creatures they can have no life but what they have in and from God, and therefore that wrathful life which they have is truly said to be a wrath of God upon them. And yet it is as strictly true that there is no wrath in God Himself, that He is not changed in His temper towards the creatures, that He does not cease to be one and the same Infinite Fountain of Goodness, infinitely flowing forth in the riches of His Love upon all and every life. But the creatures have changed their state in nature, and so the God of nature can only be manifested in and to them according to their own state in nature. And this is the true ground of rightly under-

FURY IS NOT IN ME

standing all that is said of the wrath and vengeance of God in and upon the creatures. It is only in such a sense as the curse or unhappiness of God may be said to be upon them, not because anything cursed or unhappy can be in or come from God, but because they have made that life, which they must have in God, to be mere curse and unhappiness to them. For every creature that lives must have its life in and from God, and therefore God must be in every creature. This is as true of devils as of holy angels. But how is God in them? Why, only as He is manifested in nature. Holy angels have the triune life of God in them, therefore God is in them all Love, Goodness, Majesty, and Glory, and theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Devils have nothing of this triune life left in them but the fire of eternal nature broken off from all light and joy. And, therefore, the light that they can have in and from God is only a life of wrath and darkness, and theirs is the kingdom of hell. And because this life is a strength of life which they must have in and from God, and which they cannot take out of His hands, therefore is their cursed, miserable, wrathful life truly and justly said to be the curse and wrath and vengeance of God in and upon them, though God Himself can no more have wrath and vengeance than He can have mischief and malice in Him. For this is a glorious twofold truth, that from God, considered as in Himself, nothing can come from eternity to eternity but infinite love, goodness, happiness, and glory, and also that infinite love, goodness, happiness, and glory are and will be, for ever and ever, flowing forth from Him in the same boundless, universal, infinite manner. He is the same infinitely overflowing Fountain of Love, Goodness, and Glory, after as before the fall of any creatures. His love, and the infinite workings of it, can no more be lessened than His power can be increased by any outward thing. No creature, or number of creatures, can raise any anger in Him. It is as impossible as to cast terror or darkness or pain into Him, for nothing can come into God from the creature,

nothing can be in Him but that which the Holy Trinity in Unity is in itself. All creatures are products of the Infinite Triune Love of God; nothing willed and desired and formed them but Infinite Love, and they have all of them all the happiness, beauty, and excellency that an infinitely powerful Love can reach out to them. The same Infinite Love continues still in its first creating goodness, willing, desiring, working, and doing nothing with regard to all creatures but what it willed, did, and desired in the creation of them. This God over nature and creature darts no more anger at angels when fallen than He did in the creation of them. They are not in hell because Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are angry at them, and so cast them in a punishment which their wrath had contrived for them; but they are in wrath and darkness because they have done to the light which infinitely flows forth from God, as that man does to the light of the sun who puts out his own eyes. He is in darkness, not because the sun is darkened towards him, has less light for him, or has lost all inclination to enlighten him, but because he has put out that birth of light in himself which alone made him capable of seeing in the light of the sun. It is thus with fallen angels; they have extinguished in themselves that birth of light and love which was their only capacity for that happiness which infinitely and everywhere flows forth from God; and they no more have their punishment from God Himself than the man who puts out his eyes has his darkness from the sun itself. . . .

And here, in this dark, wrathful fire of the fallen creature, do we truly find that wrath and anger and vengeance of God that cleave to sin, that must be quenched, atoned, and satisfied, before the sinner can be reconciled to God; that is, before it can have again that triune life of God in it which is its union with the Holy Trinity of God, or its regaining the Kingdom of Heaven in itself. . . .

Neither reason nor Scripture will allow us to bring wrath into God Himself as a temper of His mind, Who is only infinite, unalter-

able, overflowing Love, as unchangeable in love as He is in power and goodness. The wrath that was awakened at the fall of man, the wrath that then seized upon him as its captive, was only a plague or evil or curse that sin had brought forth in nature and creature; it was only the beginning of hell. It was such a wrath as God Himself pitied man's lying under it: it was such a wrath as God Himself furnished man with a power of overcoming and extinguishing, and therefore was not a wrath that was according to the mind, will, liking, or wisdom of God, and therefore it was not a wrath that was in God Himself, or which was exercised by His sovereign wisdom over His disobedient creatures. It was not such a wrath as when sovereign princes are angry at offenders, and will not cease from their resentment till some political satisfaction or valuable amends be made to their slighted authority. No, no; it was such a wrath as God Himself hated, as He hates sin and hell, a wrath that the God of all nature and creature so willed to be removed and extinguished, that seeing nothing less could do it, He sent His only-begotten Son into the world that all mankind might be saved and delivered from it. For seeing the wrath that was awakened and brought forth by the fall, and which wanted to be appeased, atoned, and quenched, was the wrath of eternal death and eternal hell that had taken man captive, therefore God spared not the precious, powerful, efficacious blood of the holy Jesus, because that alone could extinguish this eternal wrath of death and hell, and rekindle heaven and eternal life again in the soul. And thus all that the Scriptures speak of the necessity and powerful atonement of the life and death of Christ, all that they say of the infinite love of God towards fallen man, and all that they say of the eternal wrath and vengeance to which man was become a prey, have the most solid foundation, and are all of them proved to be consistent harmonious truths of the greatest certainty, according to the plain letter of Scripture.—[*An Appeal to all that Doubt*, p. 153.]

TO THE LAW AND TO THE TESTIMONY

THEOGENES.—But I still ask, What must I do with all those scriptures, which not only make God capable of being provoked to wrath and resentment, but frequently inflamed with the highest degrees of rage, fury, and vengeance, that can be expressed by words?

THEOPHILUS.—I promised, you know, to remove this difficulty, and will be as good as my word. But I must first tell you that you are in much more distress about it than you need to be. For in the little book of *Regeneration*, in the *Appeal*, in the *Spirit of Prayer*, and others of our books which you have read with such entire approbation, the whole matter is cleared up from its true ground, how wrath in the Scriptures is ascribed to God and yet cannot belong to the nature of the Deity.

Thus you are told in the *Appeal* that after these two falls of two orders of creatures (that is, of angels and man), the Deity itself came to have new and strange names; new and unheard-of tempers and inclinations of wrath, fury, and vengeance came to be ascribed to it. I call them new because they began at the fall; I call them strange, because they were foreign to the Deity and could not belong to God in Himself. Thus, God is said to be a Consuming Fire. But to whom? To the fallen angels and lost souls. But why and how is He so to them? It is because those creatures have lost all that they had from God but the fire of their nature, and therefore God can only be found and manifested in them as a consuming fire. Now is it not justly said that God, Who is nothing but Infinite Love, is yet in such creatures only a Consuming Fire? And that, though God be nothing but Love, yet they are under the wrath and vengeance of God, because they have only that fire in them which is broken off from the light and love of God, and so can know or feel nothing of God but His fire of nature in them? As creatures they can have no life but what they have in and from God, and therefore that wrathful life which they

have is truly said to be a wrath or fire of God upon them. And yet it is still strictly true that there is no wrath in God Himself, that He is not changed in His temper towards the creatures, that He does not cease to be one and the same Infinite Fountain of Goodness infinitely flowing forth in the riches of His Love upon all and every life. Now, sir, mind what follows as the true ground, how wrath can and can not be ascribed to God. God is not changed from love to wrath, but the creatures have changed their own state, in nature, and so the God of nature can only be manifested in them according to their own state in nature. And this is the true ground of rightly understanding all that is said of the wrath and vengeance of God in and upon the creatures. It is only in such a sense as the curse of God may be said to be upon them, not because anything cursed can be in or come from God, but because they have made that life which they must have in God to be a mere curse to themselves. For every creature that lives must have its life in and from God, and therefore God must be in every creature. This is as true of devils as of holy angels. But how is God in them? Why, only as He is manifested in nature. Holy angels have the triune life of God, as manifested in nature, so manifested also in them, and therefore God is in them all love, goodness, majesty, and glory, and theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Devils have nothing of this triune life left in them but the fire, or wrath, of eternal nature broken off from all light and love, and therefore the life that they can have in and from God is only and solely a life of wrath, rage, and darkness, and theirs is the kingdom of hell. And because this life, though all rage and darkness, is a strength and power of life, which they must have in and from God, and which they cannot take out of His hands, therefore is their cursed, miserable, wrathful life truly and justly said to be the curse and misery and wrath and vengeance of God upon them, though God Himself can no more have curse, misery, wrath, and vengeance, than He can have

mischief, malice, or any fearful tremblings in His Holy Triune Deity.

See now, Theogenes, what little occasion you had for your present difficulty. For here, in the above-cited words which you have been several years acquainted with, the true ground and reason is plainly shown you, how and why all the wrath, rage, and curse that is anywhere stirring in nature, or breaking forth in any creature, is and must be in all truth called by the Scriptures the wrath and rage and vengeance of God, though it be the greatest of all impossibilities for rage and wrath to be in the holy Deity itself. The Scriptures therefore are literally true in all that they affirm of the wrath of God. For is it not as literally true of God, that hell and devils are His, as that heaven and holy angels are His? Must not therefore all the wrath and rage of the one be as truly His wrath and rage burning in them, as the light and joy and glory of the other is only His goodness opened and manifested in them, according to their state in nature? Take notice of this fundamental truth. . . .

THEOGENES.—All that I wanted to know is now cleared up in the greatest plainness. I have no difficulty now about those passages of Scripture which speak of the wrath and fury and vengeance of God. Wrath is His, just as all nature is His, and yet God is mere Love, that only rules and governs wrath as He governs the foaming waves of the sea and the madness of storms and tempests. . . . Oh Theophilus! what a key have you given me to the right understanding of Scripture!—[*The Spirit of Love*, Part II. pp. 50, 71.]

['When Christ is said to have reconciled the Father to us, this is to be referred to our apprehensions; for as we are conscious of being guilty we cannot conceive of God otherwise than as of one displeased and angry with us until Christ absolves us from guilt. For God, wherever sin appears, would have His wrath and His judgment of eternal death to be apprehended.'—JOHN CALVIN. 'By anger, wrath, zeal, fury, *the effects of anger* are denoted. Anger and wrath are not properly ascribed to God, but metaphorically, denoting partly His vindicatory justice, whence all punishments flow, partly the effects of it in the punishments themselves.'—JOHN OWEN.] A. W.

THE GROANING OF CREATION

THE BONDAGE OF CORRUPTION

IT is impossible that this world, in the state and condition it is now in, should have been an immediate and original creation of God. This is as impossible as that God should create evil, either natural or moral. That this world hath evil in all its parts, that its matter is in a corrupt, disordered state, full of grossness, disease, impurity, wrath, death, and darkness, is as evident as that there is light, beauty, order, and harmony everywhere to be found in it. Therefore it is as impossible that this outward state and condition of things should be a first and immediate work of God as that there should be good and evil in God Himself. . . But now, as in man, the little world, there is excellency and perfection enough to prove that human nature is the work of an All-perfect Being, yet so much impurity and disease of corrupt flesh and blood as undeniably shows that sin has almost quite spoiled the work of God; so, in the great world, the footsteps of an infinite wisdom in the order and harmony of the whole sufficiently appear, yet the disorders, tumults, and evils of nature plainly demonstrate that the perfect condition of this world is only the remains or ruins, first, of a heaven spoiled by the fall of angels, and then of a paradise lost by the sin of man. So that man and the world in which he lives lie both in the same state of disorder and impurity, have both the same marks of life and death in them, both bring forth the same sort of evils, both want a redeemer, and have need of the same kind of death and resurrection before they can come to their first state of purity and perfection.—[*An Appeal to all that Doubt*, p. 18.]

THIS shows itself in all things of this world, chiefly in the life-giving power of the sun, in the sweetness and meekness of qualities and tempers, in the softness of sounds, the beauty of colours, the fragrance of smells, and richness of tastes, and the like, as far as it shows its descent from heaven, and its partaking of something heavenly and paradisiacal. Again, love or desire of union is the other part of heaven that is visible in this world. In things without life it is a senseless desire, a friendly mixing and uniting of their qualities, whereby they strive to be again in that first state of unity and harmony in which they existed before they were kindled into division by Lucifer. In rational creatures, it is meekness, benevolence, kindness, and friendship among one another; and thus far they have heaven and the Spirit of God in them, each in their sphere, being and doing that to one another which the Divine Love is and does to all. Again, the reason why man is naturally taken with beautiful objects, why he admires and rejoices at the sight of lucid and transparent bodies, and the splendour of precious stones, why he is delighted with the beauty of his own person, and is fond of his features when adorned with fine colours, has this only true ground,—it is because he was created in the greatest perfection of beauty, to live among all the beauties of a glorious paradise; and therefore man, though fallen, has this strong sensibility and reaching desire after all the beauties that can be picked up in fallen nature. Had not this been his case, had not beauty and light and the glory of brightness been his first state by creation, he would not no more want the beauty of objects than the ox wants to have his pasture enclosed with beautiful walls and painted gates. Every vanity of fallen man shows our first dignity, and the vanities of our desires are so many proofs of the reality of that which we are fallen from. Man wants to see himself in riches, greatness, and power, because human nature came first into the world in that state; and, therefore, what he had in reality in paradise, that he is vainly seeking for, where

FROM WHENCE THOU ART FALLEN

he is only a poor prisoner in the valley and shadow of death.—[*An Appeal to all that Doubt,* p. 145.]

AWAKE, THOU THAT SLEEPEST

O MAN! consider thyself. Here thou standest in the earnest perpetual strife of good and evil; all nature is continually at work to bring about the great redemption; the whole creation is travailing in pain and laborious working to be delivered from the vanity of time; and wilt thou be asleep? Everything thou hearest or seest says nothing, shows nothing to thee, but what either eternal light or eternal darkness hath brought forth; for as day and night divide the whole of our time, so heaven and hell divide all our thoughts, words, and actions. Stir which way thou wilt, do or design what thou wilt, thou must be an agent with the one or with the other. Thou canst not stand still, because thou livest in the perpetual workings of temporal and eternal nature; if thou workest not with the good, the evil that is in nature carries thee along with it. Thou hast the height and depth of eternity in thee, and, therefore, be doing what thou wilt, either in the closet, the field, the shop, or the church, thou art sowing that which grows and must be reaped in eternity. Nothing of thine can vanish away; but every thought, motion, and desire of thy heart has its effect, either in the height of heaven or the depth of hell; and as time is upon the wing to put an end to the strife of good and evil and bring about the last great separation of all things into their eternal state, with such speed art thou making haste either to be wholly an angel or wholly a devil. O! therefore awake, watch and pray, and join with all thy force with that goodness of God, which has created time and all things in it, to have a happy end in eternity. —[*An Appeal to all that Doubt,* p. 131.]

THE HEART OF MAN

THE HEART IS THE MAN

OUR heart is our manner of existence or the state in which we feel ourselves to be; it is an inward life, a vital sensibility, which contains our manner of feeling what and how we are; it is the state of our desirés and tendencies, of inwardly seeing, hearing, tasting, relishing, and feeling that which passes within us; it is that to us inwardly with regard to ourselves, which our senses of seeing, hearing, feeling, and suchlike are with regard to things that are without, or external to us. . . .

Your reason can be very nicely religious, very strict in its descriptions of goodness, at the same time that the heart is a mere libertine sunk into the very dregs of corruption; on the other hand, you know that when your reason is debauched with arguments, is contending for profaneness, and seems full of proof that piety is superstition, your heart at the same time has a virtue in it that secretly dissents from all that you say. . . . Therefore, my dear friend, know the place of your religion. Turn inwards, listen to the voice of grace, the instinct of God that speaks and moves within you; and, instead of forming dead and lifeless images, let your heart pray to God that all that is good and holy in Him may touch and stir and revive all that is capable of goodness and holiness in you. Your heart wants nothing but God, and nothing but your heart can receive Him. This is the only place and seat of religion, and of all communication between God and you. . . . Lay the cause of infidelity where you will, it is a certain truth that it loses only in this insensibility of heart, in this extinction of the religion of nature; and if the least sentiment of penitence arises

in your heart, or a sensibility of the need of divine mercy, the gospel has got so far an entrance into you, and it cannot lose its hold of you, but by your losing this state of heart. Let your reason pretend what it will, and fancy it has ever so many objections of speculation and argument against the gospel, they are all objections of the heart. For the gospel speaks only to the heart, and nothing but the heart can either receive or reject it. For this is an eternal truth, which you cannot too much reflect upon, that reason always follows the state of the heart, and what your heart is, that is your reason. If your heart is full of sentiments of penitence and of faith in the divine mercy, your reason will take part with your heart, and will entertain itself with all arguments, ideas, and discourses that can exercise this religion of the heart; but if your heart is shut up in death and dryness, your reason will be a poor quibbler in words and dead images, and will delight in nothing but such dry objections and speculations as answer to the deadness and insensibility of your heart.—[*A Demonstration, etc.*, pp. 216, 219, 227.]

YOUR heart is the best and greatest gift of God to you. It is the highest, greatest, strongest, and noblest power of your nature. It forms your whole life, be it what it will. All evil and all good comes from it. Your heart alone has the key of life and death. It does all that it will; reason is but its plaything, and, whether in time or eternity, can only be a mere beholder of the wonders of happiness or forms of misery which the right or wrong working of the heart is entered into.—[*The Spirit of Prayer*, p. 162.]

WHAT a folly, then, to be so often perplexed about the way to God! For nothing is the way to God but our heart. God is nowhere else to be found, and the heart itself cannot find Him, or be helped by anything else to find Him, but by its own love of Him, faith in Him, dependence upon Him,

resignation to Him, and expectation of all from Him.—[*The Spirit of Love*, Part II. p. 227.]

O WRETCHED MAN THAT I AM

MY dear worthy friend, whom I much love and esteem, your letter, though full of complaints about the state of your heart, was very much according to my mind, and gives me great hopes that God will carry on the good work He has begun in you, and lead you by His Holy Spirit through all those difficulties under which you at present labour. The desire that you have to be better than you find yourself at present is God's call begun to be heard within you, and will make itself to be more heard within you, if you give but way to it, and reverence it as such; humbly believing that He that calls will, and only can, help you to pay right and full obedience to it. . . .

But, to come to your own state, you seem to yourself to be all infatuation and stupidity, because your head and your heart are so contrary, the one delighting in heavenly notions, the other governed by earthly passions and pursuits. It is happy for you that you know and acknowledge this; for only through this truth, through the full and deep perception of it, can you have any entrance, or so much as the beginning of an entrance, into the liberty of the children of God. God is, in this respect, dealing with you, as He does with those whose darkness is to be changed into light, which can never be done till you fully know the real badness of your own heart, and your utter inability to deliver yourself from it; and were you in a better state as to your own thinking, the matter would be worse with you. For the badness in your heart, though you had no sensibility of it, would still be there, and would only be concealed to your much greater hurt. For there it certainly is, whether it be seen and found or not, and sooner or later must show itself in its full deformity, or the old man will never die the death which is due to him, and which must be undergone before the new man in Christ can be formed in us. All that you com-

plain of in your heart is common to man as man. There is no heart that is without it; and this is the one ground why every man as such, however different in temper, complexion, or natural endowments from others, has one and the same full reason and absolute necessity of being born again from above. Flesh and blood and the spirit of this world govern every spring in the heart of the natural man; and therefore you can never enough adore that ray of divine light which, breaking in upon your darkness, has discovered this to be the state of your heart, and raised only those faint wishes that you feel to be delivered from it. For, faint as they are, they have their degree of goodness in them, and as certainly proceed solely from the goodness of God working in your soul as the first dawning of the morning is solely from and wrought by the same sun which helps us to the noonday light. Firmly, therefore, believe this as a certain truth, that the present sensibility of your incapacity for goodness is to be cherished as a heavenly seed of life, as the blessed work of God in your soul. Could you like anything in your own heart, or so much as fancy any good to be in it, or believe that you had any power of your own to embrace and follow truth, this comfortable opinion, so far as it goes, would be your turning away from God and all goodness, and building iron walls of separation betwixt God and your soul. For conversion to God only then begins to be in truth and reality, when we see nothing that can give us the least degree of faith, of hope, of trust, or comfort in anything that we are of ourselves. To see vanity of vanities in all outward things, to loathe and abhor certain sins, are, indeed, something, but yet as nothing in comparison of feeling and believing the vanity of vanities within us, and ourselves as utterly unable to take one single step in true goodness as to add one cubit to our stature.

A broken and contrite heart God will not despise. That is, God will not, God cannot, pass by, overlook, or disregard it. But the heart is then only broken and contrite when all its strongholds

are broken down, all false coverings taken off, and it sees, with inwardly opened eyes, everything to be bad, false, and rotten, that does or can proceed from it as its own. But you will perhaps say that your conviction is only an uneasy sensibility of your own state and has not the goodness of a broken and contrite heart in it. Let it be so, yet it is rightly in order to it, and it can only begin as it begins at present in you. Your conviction is certainly not full and perfect: for if it was, you would not complain or grieve at inability to help or mend yourself, but would patiently expect, and only look for help from God alone. But whatever is wanting in your conviction, be it what it will, it cannot be added by yourself, nor come any other way than as the highest degree of the Divine Life can come into it. Know, therefore, your want of this as of all other goodness. But know also at the same time that it cannot be had through your own willing and running, but through God that showeth mercy; that is to say, through God Who giveth us Jesus Christ. For Jesus Christ is the One Only Mercy of God to all the fallen world. Now, if all the mercy of God is only to be found in Christ Jesus, if He alone can save us from our sins, if He alone has power to heal all our infirmities and restore original righteousness, what room for any other pains, labour, or inquiry, but where and how Christ is to be found? It matters not what our evils are, deadness, blindness, infatuation, hardness of heart, covetousness, wrath, pride, ambition, and such like, our remedy is always one and the same, always at hand, always certain and infallible. Seven devils are as easily cast out by Christ as one. He came into the world not to save from this or that disorder, but to destroy all the power and works of the devil in man. If you ask where and how is Christ to be found, I will answer: in your own heart, by your own heart, and nowhere else, nor by anything else. But you will perhaps say it is your very heart that keeps you a stranger to Christ, and Him to you, because your heart is all bad and as unholy as a den of thieves. I

answer that the finding this to be the state of your heart is the real finding of Christ in it. For nothing else but Christ can reveal and make manifest the sin and evil in you. And he that discovers sin is the same Christ that takes away sin. So that as soon as complaining guilt sets itself before you and will be seen, you may be assured that Christ is in you of a truth. For Christ must first come as a Discoverer and Reprover of sin. It is the infallible proof of His Holy Presence within you. Hear Him, then reverence Him; submit to Him as a Discoverer and Reprover of sin. Own His power and presence in the feeling of your guilt, and then He that wounded will heal, He that found out the sin will take it away, and He Who showed you your den of thieves will turn it into a holy temple of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.—[*Letter* xi.]

SAY NOT, WHO SHALL BRING CHRIST DOWN?

POOR sinner! consider the Treasure thou hast within thee. The Saviour of the world, the Eternal Word of God, lies hid in thee as a spark of the Divine Nature which is to overcome sin and death and hell within thee and generate the life of heaven again in thy soul. Turn to thy heart, and thy heart will find its Saviour, its God, within itself. Thou seest, hearest, and feelest nothing of God, because thou seekest for Him abroad with thy outward eyes, thou seekest for Him in books, in controversies, in the church, and in outward exercises; but there thou wilt not find Him till thou hast first found Him in thy heart. Seek for Him in thy heart and thou wilt never seek in vain; for there He dwells, there is the seat of His Light and Holy Spirit. For this turning to the Light and Spirit of God within thee is thy only true turning unto God; there is no other way of finding Him. For, though God be everywhere present, yet He is only present to thee in the deepest and most central part of thy soul. Thy natural senses cannot possess God, or unite thee to Him; nay, thy inward faculties of understanding, will, and memory, can only reach after God, but cannot be the place of His habitation in thee. But there is a root or

depth in thee from whence all these faculties come forth as lines from a centre, or as branches from the body of the tree. This depth is called the centre, the fund or bottom of the soul. This depth is the unity, the eternity—I had almost said the infinity—of thy soul; for it is so infinite that nothing can satisfy it or give it any rest but the infinity of God. In this depth of the soul the Holy Trinity brought forth its own living image in the first created man, bearing in himself a living representation of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and this was his dwelling in God and God in him. This was the Kingdom of God within him, and made paradise without him. But the day that Adam did eat of the forbidden earthly tree, in that day he absolutely died to this Kingdom of God within him. This depth or centre of his soul, having lost its God, was shut up in death and darkness and became a prisoner in an earthly animal that only excelled its brethren, the beasts, in an upright form and serpentine subtlety. Thus ended the fall of man. But from that moment that the God of mercy had reserved and treasured up in Adam the Bruiser of the serpent, from that moment all the riches and treasures of the Divine Nature came again into man as a seed of salvation sown into the centre of the soul, and only lies hidden there in every man till he desires to rise from his fallen state and to be born again from above. Awake, then, thou that sleepest, and Christ, Who from all eternity has been espoused to thy soul, shall give thee light. Begin to search and dig in thine own field for this Pearl of Eternity that lies hidden in it; it cannot cost thee too much, nor canst thou buy it too dear, for it is All, and when thou hast found it thou wilt know that all which thou hast sold or given away for it is as mere a nothing as a bubble upon the water.—[*The Spirit of Prayer*, p. 58.]

THE WILL

OUR WILLS

GOD is all Good, and everything that comes out from Him as His creature, product, or offspring, must come forth in that state of goodness which it had in Him; and every creature, however high in its birth from God, must in the beginning of its life have a power of joining with or departing from God, because the beginning of its life is nothing else but the beginning of its own self-motion as a creature; and therefore no creature can have its state or condition fixed till it gives itself up either wholly unto God or turns wholly from Him; for if it is an intelligent creature, it can only be so by having the intelligent Will of God derived into it, or made creaturely in it; but the intelligent Will brought into a creaturely form must be that which it was in the Creator, and therefore must be the same self-existent and self-moving power that it was before it became creaturely in any angel or spirit. . . . Now, seeing the Light and Spirit of Heaven or Eternal Nature is as different from the light and spirit of this world as an angel is from an animal of the field, if you have lived here only to the spirit and temper of this world, governed by its good and evil, and only wise according to its wisdom, you must die as destitute of the Light and Spirit of Heaven as the beasts that perish. You have now an aversion and dislike, or at least a disbelief, of the doctrines of Christian regeneration; you struggle against this kind of redemption, you would have no salvation from the Light and Spirit of Eternity regenerated in your soul. Where then must you be when the light and spirit of this world leave you?

Therefore, O man! look well to thyself, and see what birth thou art bringing forth, what nature is growing up in thee, and be assured that stand thou must in that state in nature which the

working of thy own will has brought forth in thee, whether it be happy or miserable. Expect no arbitrary goodness of God towards thee when thou leavest this world, for that must grow for ever which hath grown here. God hath created thee in nature, His mercy hath shown thee all the laws and necessities of nature, and how thou mayest rise from thy corruption, according to the possibilities of nature, and He can only save thee by thy conforming to the demands of nature. The greatness of the Divine mercy and favour towards all men appears in this, that when all nature had failed, and mankind could from nature have nothing out eternal death, that God brought such a second Adam into the world as, being God and Man, could make nature begin its work again where it failed in the first Adam.—[*An Appeal to all that Doubt*, pp. 61, 103, 106.]

I WAS AS A BEAST

HERE we see the plain and true original of all evil without any perplexity or imputation upon . . . God. The will of the creature is the only opener of all evil or good n the creature. The will stands between God and nature, and must in all its workings unite either with God or nature. The will totally resigned and given up to God is one spirit with God, and God dwelleth in it; the will turned from God is taken prisoner in the wrath, fire, and darkness of nature. . . .

THEOPHILUS.—A will given up to earthly goods is at grass with Nebuchadnezzar, and has one life with the beasts of the field; for earthly desires keep up the same life in a man and an ox. For the one only reason why the animals of this world have no sense or knowledge of God is this: it is because they cannot form any other than earthly desires, and so can only have an earthly life. When, therefore, a man wholly turns his working will to earthly desires, he dies to the excellence of his natural state, and may be said only to live, and move, and have his being in the life of this world as the beasts have. Earthly food

and suchlike, only desired and used for the support of the earthly body, is suitable to man's present condition and the order of nature. But when the desire, the delight and longing of the soul, is set upon earthly things, then the humanity is degraded, is fallen from God, and the life of the soul is made as earthly and bestial as the life of the body. For the creature can be neither higher nor lower, neither better nor worse, than as the will worketh. For you are to observe that the will has a divine and magic power; what it desires, that it takes, and of that it eateth and liveth. Wherever and in whatever the working will chooses to dwell and delight, that becomes the soul's food, its condition, its body, its clothing and habitation. For all these are the true and certain effects and powers of the working will. Nothing does or can go with a man into heaven, nothing follows him into hell, but that in which the will dwelt, with which it was fed, nourished, and clothed in this life. And this is to be noted well, that death can make no alteration of this state of the will. Death only takes off the outward worldly covering of flesh and blood, and forces the soul to see and feel and know what a life, what a state, food, body, and habitation, its own working will has brought forth for it. O Academicus, stop a while and let your hearing be turned into feeling. Tell me, is there anything in life that deserves a thought, but how to keep this working of our will in a right state, and to get that purity of heart which alone can see and know and find and possess God? Is there anything so frightful as this worldly spirit, which turns the soul from God, makes it an house of darkness, and feeds it with the food of time at the expense of all the riches of eternity?—[*The Spirit of Prayer*, pp. 33, 119.]

HIS OWN VOLUNTARY WILL

ACADEMICUS.—Whence hath the will of man this mighty power, that it can have nothing but that which itself hath willed?

THEOPHILUS.—You might as well ask why a circle must be per-

fectly round, or a straight line free from every degree of crookedness. For as it is not a circle till it is perfectly round, nor a straight line till it is free from crookedness, so the will is not in being but so far as it is free, is its own mover, and can have nothing but that which it willeth. The will is not a made thing, or a thing that came out of some different state into the state of a will. But the free will of man is a true and real birth from the free, eternal, uncreated Will of God, which willed to have a creaturely offspring of itself, or to see itself in a creaturely state. And therefore the will of man hath the nature of Divine Freedom; hath the nature of Eternity, and the nature of Omnipotence in it, because it is what it is, and hath what it hath, as a spark, a ray, a genuine birth of the eternal, free, omnipotent Will of God. And therefore as the Will of God is superior to and ruleth over all nature, so the will of man, derived from the Will of God, is superior to and ruleth over all his own nature. And thence it is that, as to itself, and so far as its own nature reacheth, it hath the freedom and omnipotence of that Will from which it is descended, and can have or receive nothing but what itself doth and worketh in and to itself. And herein consisteth the infinite goodness of God in the birth of all intelligent creatures, and also the exceeding height, perfection, and happiness of their created states. They are descended from God; they can will and work with God, and partake of the divine happiness. They can receive no injustice, hurt, or violence either from nature or creature, but must be only that which they generate, and have no evil or hurt but that which they do in and to themselves. All things stand in the will, and every thing, animate or inanimate, is the effect and produce of that will which worketh in it, and formeth it to be that which it is. And every will, wherever found, is the birth and effect of some antecedent will, for will can only proceed from will, till you come to the first working Will, which is God Himself.—[*The Way to Divine Knowledge*, p. 143.]

SELF

SELF THE ESSENCE OF SIN

OUR Divine Master compares the religion of the learned Pharisees to whited sepulchres, outwardly beautiful. but inwardly full of rottenness, stench, and dead men's bones. Now, whence was it that a religion so serious in its restraints, so beautiful in its outward form and practices, and commanding such reverence from all that beheld it, was yet charged by Truth itself with having inwardly such an abominable nature? It was only for this one reason: because it was a religion of self. Therefore, from the beginning to the end of the world, it must be true, that where self is kept alive, has power and keeps up its own interests, whether in speaking, writing, teaching, or defending the most specious number of Scripture doctrines and religious forms, there is that very old Pharisee still alive, whom Christ with so much severity of language constantly condemned. And the reason of such heavy condemnation is, because self is the only root, or rather the sum-total of all sin. Every sin that can be named is centred in it, and the creature can sin no higher than he can live to self. For self is the fulness of atheism and idolatry, it is nothing else but the creature broken off from God and Christ; it is the power of Satan living and working in us, and the sad continuance of that first turning from God which was the whole fall or death of our first father. And yet, sad and satanical as this self is, what is so much cherished and nourished with our daily love, fears, and cares about it? How much worldly wisdom, how much laborious learning, how many subtleties of contrivance, and how many flattering applications and submissions are made to the world, that

this apostate self may have its fulness, both of inward joys and outward glory? . . . Man's intellectual faculties are by the fall in a much worse state than his natural animal appetites, and want a much greater self-denial. And when own will, own understanding, and own imagination, have their natural strength indulged and gratified, and are made seemingly rich and honourable with the treasures acquired from a study of the *Belles Lettres*, they will just as much help poor fallen men to be like-minded with Christ as the art of cookery, well and daily studied, will help a professor of the gospel to the spirit and practice of Christian abstinence. To know all this to be strictly the truth, no more need be known than these two things:—(1) That our salvation consists wholly in being saved from ourselves, or from that which we are by nature; (2) That in the whole nature of things nothing could be this Salvation or Saviour to us, but such an Humility of God manifested in human nature as is beyond all expression. Hence, the first unalterable term of this Saviour to fallen man is this: except a man denies himself, forsakes all that he has, yea, all his own life, he cannot be My disciple. And to shew that this is but the beginning or ground of man's salvation, the Saviour adds: learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart.

What a light is here for those that can bear or love the light! Self is the whole evil of fallen nature; self-denial is our capacity of being saved; humility is our saviour. This is every man's short lesson of life, and he that has well learnt it is scholar enough and has had all the benefit of a most finished education. Then old Adam with all his ignorance is cast out of him, and when Christ's humility is learnt, then he has the very mind of Christ, and that which brings him forth a Son of God. . . .

SELF-GLORIOUS PRIDE

Self is the root, the tree, and the branches of all the evils of our fallen state. We are without God, because we are in the life of self. Self-love, self-esteem, and self-seeking are the very essence and life of pride; and the devil the first father of pride is

never absent from them, nor without power in them. To die to these essential properties of self is to make the devil depart from us. But as soon as we would have self-abilities have a share in our good works, the satanic spirit of pride is in union with us, and we are working for the maintenance of self-love, self-esteem, and self-seeking. All the vices of fallen angels and men have their birth and power in the pride of self, or, I may better say, in the atheism and idolatry of self; for self is both atheist and idolater. It is atheist, because it has rejected God; it is an idolater, because it is its own idol. On the other hand, all the virtues of the Heavenly Life are the virtues of humility. Not a joy, or glory, or praise in heaven, but is what it is through humility. It is humility alone that makes the unpassable gulf between heaven and hell. No angels in heaven, but because humility is in all their breath; no devils in hell, but because the fire of pride is their whole fire of life. What is, then, or in what lies the great struggle for eternal life? It all lies in the strife between pride and humility. All other things, be they what they will, are but as under-workmen; pride and humility are the two master-powers, the two kingdoms in strife for the eternal possession of man. . . . What, therefore, has every one so much to fear, to renounce and abhor, as every inward sensibility of self-exaltation, and every outward work that proceeds from it? But now, at what things shall a man look, to see that working of self which raises pride to its strongest life, and most of all hinders the birth of the humble Jesus in his soul? Shall he call the pomps and vanities of the world the highest works of self-adoration? Shall he look at fops and beaux and painted ladies to see the pride that has the most of antichrist in it? No, by no means. These are indeed marks, shameful enough, of the vain, foolish heart of man, but yet, comparatively speaking, they are but the skin-deep follies of that pride which the fall of man has begotten and brought forth in him. Would you see the deepest root, and iron-

strength of pride and self-adoration, you must enter into the dark chamber of man's fiery soul, where the Light of God, which alone gives humility and meek submission to all created spirits, being extinguished by the death which Adam died, Satan, or, which is the same thing, self-exaltation, became the strong man that kept possession of the house, till a stronger than he should come upon him. In this secret source of an eternal fiery soul, glorying in the light of this world, a swelling kingdom of pomps and vanities is set up in the heart of man, of which all outward pomps and vanities are but its childish transitory playthings. The inward strong man of pride, the diabolical self, has his higher works within; he dwells in the strength of the heart, and has every power and faculty of the soul offering continual incense to him. His memory, his will, his understanding, his imagination, are always at work for him, and for no one else. His memory is the faithful repository of all the fine things that self has ever done; and lest anything of them should be lost or forgotten, she is continually setting them before his eyes. His will, though it has all the world before it, yet goes after nothing but as self sends it. His understanding is ever upon the stretch for new projects to enlarge the dominions of self; and if this fails, imagination comes in as the last and truest support of self; she makes him a king and mighty lord of castles in the air. This is that full-born natural self, that must be pulled out of the heart and totally denied, or there can be no disciple of Christ; which is only saying this plain truth, that the apostate self-idolatrous nature of the old man must be put off, or there can be no new creature in Christ. . . .

MYSTIC RELIGION

What now is become of this true Church, or where must the man go, who would fain be a living member of it? He need go nowhere; because, wherever he is, that which is to save him, and that which he is to be saved from, is always with him. Self is all the evil that he has, and God is all the goodness that he ever can have; but self is always with him, and God is always with him.

Death to self is his only entrance into the Church of Life, and nothing but God can give death to self. Self is an inward life, and God is an Inward Spirit of Life; therefore, nothing kills that which must be killed in us, or quickens that which must come to life in us, but the inward work of God in the soul, and the inward work of the soul in God. This is that mystic religion which, though it has nothing in it but that same spirit, that same truth, and that same life, which always was, and always must be the religion of all God's holy angels and saints in heaven, is by the wisdom of this world accounted to be madness. As wisely done, as to reckon him mad, who says, that the vanity of things temporal cannot be or give life to the things that are eternal; or that the circumcision of the flesh is but as poor a thing as the whetting the knife, in comparison of that inward mystic circumcision of the heart, which can only be done by that word of God, which is sharper than any two-edged sword, and pierces to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit.—[*An Humble Address to the Clergy*, pp. 33, 100, 104, 108, 203.]

NOT MY WILL BUT THINE

THIS is Christianity, a spiritual society, not because it has no worldly concerns, but because all its members, as such, are born of the Spirit, kept alive, animated, and governed by the Spirit of God. It is constantly called by our Lord the Kingdom of God, or Heaven, because all its ministry and service, all that is done in it, is done in obedience and subjection to that Spirit by which angels live and are governed in heaven. Hence our blessed Lord taught His disciples to pray, that this Kingdom might come, that so God's will might be done on earth, as it is in heaven; which could not be but by that same Spirit by which it is done in heaven. The short is this: The kingdom of self is the fall of man, or the great apostasy from the life of God in the soul; and every one, wherever he be, that lives unto self, is still under the fall and great apostasy from God. The Kingdom of Christ is the

Spirit and Power of God dwelling and manifesting itself in the birth of a new inward man; and no one is a member of this Kingdom but so far as a true birth of the Spirit is brought forth in him. These two kingdoms take in all mankind; he that is not of one, is certainly in the other; dying to one is living to the other. Hence we may gather these following truths: *First,* here is shewn the true ground and reason of what was said above, namely, that when the call of God to repentance first arises in thy soul, thou art to be retired, silent, passive, and humbly attentive to this new risen light within thee, by wholly stopping or disregarding the workings of thy own will, reason, and judgment. It is because all these are false counsellors, the sworn servants, bribed slaves of thy fallen nature, they are all born and bred in the kingdom of self; and therefore if a new kingdom is to be set up in thee, if the operation of God is to have its effect in thee, all these natural powers of self are to be silenced and suppressed till they have learned obedience and subjection to the Spirit of God. Now this is not requiring thee to become a fool, or to give up thy claim to sense and reason, but is the shortest way to have thy sense and reason delivered from folly, and thy whole rational nature strengthened, enlightened, and guided by that Light which is Wisdom itself. A child that obediently denies his own will and own reason to be guided by the will and reason of a truly wise and understanding tutor, cannot be said to make himself a fool, and give up the benefit of his rational nature, but to have taken the shortest way to have his own will and reason made truly a blessing to him. *Secondly,* hence is to be seen the true ground and necessity of that universal mortification and self-denial with regard to all our senses, appetites, tempers, passions, and judgments. It is because all our whole nature has fallen from the Life of God, is in a state of contrariety to the order and end of our creation, a continual source of disorderly appetites, corrupt tempers, and false judgments. And

therefore every motion of it is to be mortified, changed, and purified from its natural state, before we can enter into the Kingdom of God. Thus when our Lord says: Except a man hateth his father and mother, yea, and his own life, he cannot be My disciple, it is because our best tempers are yet carnal and full of the imperfections of our fallen nature. The doctrine is just and good; not as if father and mother were to be hated; but that love which an unregenerate person, or natural man, has towards them, is to be hated, as being a blind self-love, full of all the weakness and partiality with which fallen man loves, honours, esteems, and cleaves to himself. This love, born from corrupt flesh and blood, and polluted with self, is to be hated and parted with, that we may love them with a love born of God, with such a love and on such a motive as Christ has loved us. And then the disciple of Christ far exceeds all others in the love of parents. Again, our own life is to be hated; and the reason is plain: it is because there is nothing lovely in it. It is a legion of evil, a monstrous birth of the serpent, the world, and the flesh; it is an apostasy from the Life and Power of God in the soul, a life that is death to heaven, that is pure unmixed idolatry, that lives wholly to self, and not to God; and therefore all this own life is to be absolutely hated, all this self is to be denied and mortified, if the nature, spirit, tempers, and inclinations of Christ are to be brought to life in us. For it is as impossible to live to both these lives at once as for a body to move two contrary ways at the same time. And, therefore, all these mortifications and self-denials have an absolute necessity in the nature of the thing itself. Thus, when our Lord further says: Unless a man forsaketh all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple, the reason is plain, and the necessity absolute. It is because all that the natural man has is in the possession of self-love, and therefore this possession is to be absolutely forsaken and parted with. All that he has is to be put into other hands, to be given to Divine Love, or this natural man

cannot be changed into a disciple of Christ, for self-love in all that it has is earthly, sensual, and devilish, and therefore must have all taken away from it; and then to the natural man all is lost, he has nothing left, all is laid down at the feet of Jesus. And then all things are common, as soon as self-love has lost the possession of them. And then the disciple of Christ, though having nothing, yet possesseth all things; all that the natural man has forsaken is restored to the disciple of Christ an hundredfold. For self-love, the greatest of all thieves, being now cast out, and all that he had stolen and hidden thus taken from him and put into the hands of Divine Love, every mite becomes a large treasure, and mammon opens the door into everlasting habitations. This was the spirit of the first draught of a Christian church at Jerusalem, a church made truly after the pattern of heaven, where the Love that reigns in heaven reigned in it, where Divine Love broke down all the selfish fences, the locks and bolts of me, mine, and my own, and laid all things common to the members of this new Kingdom of God on earth.

LOVE GOD, AND ALL ELSE IN GOD

But thou wilt perhaps say: if all self-love is to be renounced, then all love of our neighbour is renounced along with it, because the commandment is only to love our neighbour as ourselves. The answer here is easy, and yet no quarter given to self-love. There is but one only love in heaven, and yet the angels of God love one another in the same manner as they love themselves. The matter is this:—the one supreme unchangeable rule of love, which is a law to all intelligent beings of all worlds, and will be a law to all eternity, is this, viz., That God alone is to be loved for Himself, and all other beings only in Him and for Him. Whatever intelligent creature lives not under this rule of love, is so far fallen from the order of His creation, and is, till he returns to this eternal law of love, an apostate from God, and incapable of the kingdom of heaven. Now if God alone is to be loved for Himself, then no creature is to be loved for itself; and so all self-love in

every creature is absolutely condemned. And if all created beings are only to be loved in and for God, then my neighbour is to be loved as I love myself, and I am only to love myself as I love my neighbour, or any other created being, that is, only in and for God. And thus the command of loving our neighbour as ourselves stands firm, and yet all self-love is plucked up by the roots. But what is loving any creature only in and for God? It is when we love it only as it is God's work, image, and delight, when we love it merely as it is God's, and belongs to Him; this is loving it in God; and when all that we wish, intend, or to do it is done from a love to God, for the honour of God, and in conformity to the Will of God, this is loving it for God. This is the one love that is, and must be, the spirit of all creatures that live united to God. Now this is no speculative refinement or fine-spun fiction of the brain, but the simple truth, a first law of nature, and a necessary band of union between God and the creature. The creature is not in God, is a stranger to Him, has lost the life of God in itself, whenever its love does not thus begin and end in God. The loss of this love was the fall of man, as it opened in him a kingdom of self, in which Satan, the world, and the flesh, could all of them bring forth their own works. If, therefore, man is to rise from his fall and return to his life in God, there is an absolute necessity that self, with all his brood of gross affections, be deposed, that his first love, in and for which he was created, may be born again in him. Christ came into the world to save sinners, to destroy the works of the devil. Now self is not only the seat and habitation, but the very life of sin. The works of the devil are all wrought in self, it is his peculiar workhouse, and therefore Christ is not come as a Saviour from sin, as a destroyer of the works of the devil in any of us, but so far as self is beaten down and overcome in us. If it is literally true what our Lord said, that His Kingdom was not of this world, then it is a truth of the same certainty that no one is a member of this Kingdom but

he that, in the literal sense of the words, renounces the spirit of this world. Christians might as well part with half the articles of their creed, or but half believe them, as really to refuse, or but by halves enter into these self-denials. For all that is in the creed is only to bring forth this dying and death to all and every part of the old man, that the Life and Spirit of Christ may be formed in us. Our redemption is this new birth; if this is not done or doing in us, we are still unredeemed. And though the Saviour of the world is come, He is not come in us, He is not received by us, is a stranger to us, is not ours, if His Life is not within us. His Life is not, cannot be, within us, but so far as the spirit of the world, self-love, self-esteem, and self-seeking are renounced and driven out of us.—[*The Spirit of Prayer*, pp. 82, 88.]

SELF IS DEATH AND HELL

ACADEMICUS.—Pray, sir, tell me more plainly what this self is, since so much depends upon it.

THEOPHILUS.—It is hell, it is the devil, it is darkness, pain, and disquiet. It is the one only enemy of Christ, the great antichrist. It is the scarlet whore, the fiery dragon, the old serpent, the devouring beast, that is mentioned in the Revelation of St. John.

ACADEMICUS.—You rather terrify than instruct me by this description.

THEOPHILUS.—It is indeed a very frightful matter; it contains everything that man has to dread and hate, to resist and avoid. Yet be assured, my friend, that, careless and merry as the world is, every man that is born into it has all these enemies to overcome within himself; and every man, till he is in the way of regeneration, is more or less governed by them. No hell in any remote place, no devil that is separate from you, no darkness or pain that is not within you, no antichrist either at Rome or England, no furious beast, no fiery dragon, without, or apart from you, can do you any hurt. It is your own hell, your own devil, your own

beast, your own antichrist, your own dragon, that lives in your own heart's blood, that alone can hurt you. Die to this self, to this inward nature, and then all outward enemies are overcome. Live to this self, and then, when this life is out, all that is within you, and all that is without you, will be nothing else but a mere seeing and feeling this hell, serpent, beast, and fiery dragon. See here, Academicus, the twofold nature of every man. He has within him a redeeming power, the meekness of the Heavenly Life, called the Lamb of God. This seed is surrounded or encompassed with the beast of fleshly lusts, the serpent of guile and subtlety, and the dragon of fiery wrath. This is the great trial or strife of human life, whether a man will live to the lusts of the beast, the guile of the serpent, the pride and wrath of the fiery dragon, or give himself up to the meekness, the patience, the sweetness, the simplicity, the humility of the Lamb of God. This is the whole of the matter between God and the creature. On one side, fire and wrath, awakened first by the rebellious angels; and on the other side, the meekness of the Lamb of God, the patience of Divine Love coming down from heaven to stop and overcome the fire and wrath that is broken out in nature and creature. Your father Adam had introduced you into the fire and wrath of the fallen angels, into a world from whence paradise is departed. Your flesh and blood is kindled in that sin, which first brought forth a murdering Cain. But, dear soul, be of good comfort, for the Meekness, the Love, the Heart, the Lamb of God is become man, has set Himself in the birth of thy own life, that in Him, and with Him, and by a birth from Him, heaven and paradise may be again opened both within thee and without thee, not for a time, but to all eternity. . . .

OBLATION OF THE WILL

This, Academicus, is the fallen human nature, and this is the old man, which is alive in every one, though in various manners, till he is born again from above. To think, therefore, of any thing in religion, or to pretend to real holiness, without totally

dying to this old man, is building castles in the air, and can bring forth nothing but Satan in the form of an angel of light. Would you know, Academicus, whence it is that so many false spirits have appeared in the world, who have deceived themselves and others with false fire and false light, laying claim to inspirations, illuminations, and openings of the Divine Life, pretending to do wonders under extraordinary calls from God? It is this: they have turned to God without turning from themselves; would be alive in God before they were dead to their own nature; a thing as impossible in itself as for a grain of wheat to be alive before it dies. Now religion in the hands of self, or corrupt nature, serves only to discover vices of a worse kind than in nature left to itself. Hence are all the disorderly passions of religious men, which burn in a worse flame than passions only employed about worldly matters: pride, self-exaltation, hatred, and persecution, under a cloak of religious zeal, will sanctify actions which nature left to itself would be ashamed to own. You may now see, Academicus, with what great reason I have called you, at your first setting out, to this great point, the total dying to self, as the only foundation of a solid piety. All the fine things you hear or read of an Inward and Spiritual Life in God, all your expectations of the Light and Holy Spirit of God, will become a false food to your souls, till you only seek for them through death to self. Observe, sir, the difference which clothes make in those who have it in their power to dress as they please; some are all for show, colours, and glitter; others are quite fantastical and affected in their dress; some have a grave and solemn habit; others are quite simple and plain in the whole manner. Now all this difference of dress is only an outward difference, that covers the same poor carcass, and leaves it full of all its own infirmities. Now all the truths of the Gospel, when only embraced and possessed by the old man, make only such superficial difference as is made by clothes. Some put on a solemn, formal, prudent, outside carriage; others appear in all the glitter and show of

religious colouring and spiritual attainments; but under all this outside difference there lies the poor fallen soul, imprisoned, unhelped, in its own fallen state. And thus it must be; it is not possible to be otherwise till the spiritual life begins at the true root, grows out of death, and is born in a broken heart, a heart broken off from all its own natural life. Then self-hatred, self-contempt, and self-denial are as suitable to this new-born spirit as self-love, self-esteem, and self-seeking are to the unregenerate man. Let me, therefore, my friend, conjure you not to look forward, or to cast about for spiritual advancement till you have rightly taken this first step in the spiritual life. All your future progress depends upon it; for this depth of religion goes no deeper than the depth of your malady; for sin has its root in the bottom of your soul, it comes to life with your flesh and blood, and breathes in the breath of your natural life; and, therefore, till you die to nature you live to sin; and whilst this root of sin is alive in you, all the virtues you put on are only like fine painted fruit hung upon a bad tree.

Academicus.—Indeed, Theophilus, you have made the difference between true and false religion as plain to me as the difference between light and darkness. But all that you have said, at the same time, is as new to me as if I had lived in a land where religion had never been named. But pray, sir, tell me how I am to take this first step which you so much insist upon.

Theophilus.—You are to turn wholly from yourself, and to give up yourself wholly unto God, in this or the like twofold form of words or thoughts: 'Oh, my God, with all the strength of my soul, assisted by Thy grace, I desire and resolve to resist and deny all my own will, earthly tempers, selfish views and inclinations; everything that the spirit of this world and the vanity of fallen nature prompts me to. I give myself up wholly and solely unto Thee, to be all Thine, to have, and do, and be, inwardly and outwardly, according to Thy good pleasure. I desire to live

for no other ends, with no other designs, but to accomplish the work which Thou requirest of me, an humble, obedient, faithful, thankful instrument in Thy hands, to be used as Thou pleasest.' You are not to content yourself, my friend, with now and then, or even many times, making this oblation of yourself to God. It must be the daily, the hourly exercise of your mind, till it is wrought into your very nature, and becomes an essential state and habit of your mind; till you feel yourself as habitually turned from all your own will, selfish ends, and earthly desires as you are from stealing and murder; till the whole turn and bent of your spirit points as constantly to God as the needle touched with the loadstone does to the north. This, sir, is your first and necessary step in the spiritual life; this is the key to all the treasures of heaven; this unlocks the sealed book of your soul, and makes room for the Light and Spirit of God to rise up in it. Without this the spiritual life is but spiritual talk, and only assists nature to be pleased with an holiness that it has not.—[*The Spirit of Prayer*, pp. 14, 19.]

WHY SELF IS SO FULL OF SIN AND MISERY

THEOGENES.—I plainly enough perceive that nature or self, without God manifested in it, is all evil and misery. But I would, if I could, more perfectly understand the precise nature of self, or what it is that makes it to be so full of evil and misery.

THEOPHILUS.—Covetousness, envy, pride, and wrath are the four elements of self, or nature, or hell, all of them inseparable from it. And the reason why it must be thus, and cannot be otherwise, is because the natural life of the creature is brought forth for the participation of some high supernatural good in the Creator. But it could have no fitness, or possible capacity to receive such good, unless it was in itself both an extremity of want, and an extremity of desire of some high good. When, therefore, this natural life is deprived of, or fallen from God, it

can be nothing else in itself but an extremity of want, continually desiring, and an extremity of desire, continually wanting. And hence it is that its whole life can be nothing else but a plague and torment of covetousness, envy, pride, and wrath, all which is precisely nature, self, or hell. Now covetousness, pride, and envy are not three different things, but only three different names for the restless workings of one and the same will or desire which, as it differently torments itself, takes these different names; for nothing is in any of them but the working of a restless desire; and all this because the natural life of the creature can do nothing else but work as a desire. And therefore, when fallen from God, its three first births, which are quite inseparable from it, are covetousness, envy, and pride. It must covet because it is a desire proceeding from want; it must assume and arrogate, because it is a desire founded on a real want of exaltation, or a higher state. Now wrath, which is a fourth birth from these three, can have no existence till some or all of these three are contradicted, or have something done to them that is contrary to their will; and then it is that wrath is necessarily born, and not till then. And thus you see in the highest degree of certainty what nature or self is, as to its essential constituent parts. It is the three forementioned inseparable properties of a desire thrown into a fourth of wrath, that can never cease because their will can never be gratified. For these four properties generate one another, and therefore generate their own torment. They have no outward cause, nor any inward power of altering themselves. And, therefore, all self or nature must be in this state till some supernatural good comes into it, or gets a birth in it. And, therefore, every pain or disorder, in the mind or body of any intelligent creature, is an undeniable proof that it is in a fallen state, and has lost that supernatural good for which it was created. So certain a truth is the fallen state of all mankind. And here lies the absolute indispensable necessity of the one

Christian redemption. Till fallen man is born again from above, till such a supernatural birth is brought forth in him by the Eternal Word and Spirit of God, he can have no possible escape or deliverance from these four elements of self or hell. Whilst man indeed lives among the vanities of time, his covetousness, envy, pride, and wrath may be in a tolerable state, may help him to a mixture of peace and trouble; they may have at times their gratifications, as well as their torments. But when death has put an end to the vanity of all earthly cheats, the soul that is not born again of the Supernatural Word and Spirit of God must find itself unavoidably devoured, or shut up in its own insatiable, unchangeable, self-tormenting covetousness, envy, pride, and wrath. O Theogenes, that I had power from God to take those dreadful scales from the eyes of every deist, which hinder him from seeing and feeling the infinite importance of this most certain truth!

Theogenes.—God give a blessing, Theophilus, to your good prayer. And then, let me tell you that you have quite satisfied my question about the nature of self. I shall never forget it, nor can I ever possibly have any doubt of the truth of it. . . .

Theophilus.—I have, I hope, sufficiently opened to you the malignant nature of that self which dwells in, and makes up the working life of every creature that has lost its right state in God, viz., that all the evil that was in the first chaos of darkness, or that still is in hell and devils, all the evil that is in material nature and material creatures, whether animate or inanimate, is nothing else, works in and with nothing else, but those first properties of nature, which drive on the life of fallen man in covetousness, envy, pride, and wrath.—[*The Spirit of Love*, pp. 191, 209.]

PRIDE

NATURE OF PRIDE

TO speak now a word or two concerning pride. Pride is an error or a vice as covetousness is a vice; it is a notable desire, ill directed. It is a right desire, earnestly to desire happiness; but that desire is sinful when it is wholly set upon gold, or any other false good. So a desire of greatness is an excellent desire, a right turn of mind; but when it fixes upon a false honour, it is a vicious irregularity. To desire the highest exaltation of which our nature is capable is as right a disposition as to desire to be as like to God as we can. . . . Pride is as earthly and down-looking a vice as covetousness, and as truly sinks the soul into a state of meanness. A delight in false honour as much debases and hinders the mind from aspiring after its true greatness as a fondness for empty riches keeps the soul averse from the approbation of her true good. That this is the effect of pride, that it debases the mind, and makes it unable to relish its true greatness, that it unfits it for the reception of doctrines which exalt and raise our nature, may be also learnt from Him Who came to lead us unto all truth. Speaking of vain-glorious men, says our blessed Saviour, how can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not that honour which cometh from God alone?—[*Fable of the Bees*, pp. 83, 85.]

HOW WE AWAKEN IT IN CHILDREN

THE first temper that we try to awaken in children is pride, as dangerous a passion as that of lust. We stir them up to vain thoughts of themselves, and do everything we can to puff up their minds with a sense of their own abilities. Whatever way of life we intend them for, we apply to the fire and vanity of their minds, and exhort them to everything from corrupt motives.

We stir them up to action from principles of strife and ambition, from glory, envy, and a desire of distinction, that they may excel others and shine in the eyes of the world. We repeat and inculcate these motives upon them till they think it a part of their duty to be proud, envious, and vain-glorious of their own accomplishments. And when we have taught them to scorn to be outdone by any, to bear no rival, to thirst after every instance of applause, to be content with nothing but the highest distinctions, then we begin to take comfort in them, and promise the world some mighty things from youths of such a glorious spirit. If children are intended for holy orders we set before them some eminent orator, whose fine preaching has made him the admiration of the age, and carried him through all the dignities and preferments of the Church. We encourage them to have these honours in their eye, and to expect the reward of their studies from them. If the youth is intended for a trade we bid him look at all the rich men of the same trade, and consider how many now are carried about in their stately coaches who began in the same low degree as he now does. We awaken his ambition, and endeavour to give his mind a right turn by often telling him how very rich such and such a tradesman died. If he is to be a lawyer, then we set great counsellors, lords, judges, and chancellors before his eyes. We tell him what great fees and great applause attend fine pleading. We exhort him to take fire at these things, to raise a spirit of emulation in himself, and to be content with nothing less than the highest honours of the long robe. That this is the nature of our best education is too plain to need any proof, and I believe there are few parents but would be glad to see these instructions daily given to their children. And after all this we complain of the effects of pride: we wonder to see grown men actuated and governed by ambition, envy, scorn, and a desire of glory, not considering that they were all the time of their youth called upon to all their action and industry upon the same principles. You

teach a child to scorn to be outdone, to thirst for distinction and applause, and is it any wonder that he continues to act all his life in the same manner? Now if a youth is ever to be so far a Christian as to govern his heart by the doctrines of humility, I would fain know at what time he is to begin it; or, if he ever is to begin it at all, why we train him up in tempers quite contrary to it? How dry and poor must the doctrine of humility sound to a youth that has been spurred up to all his industry by ambition, envy, emulation, and a desire of glory and distinction! And if he is not to act by these principles when he is a man, why do we call him to act by them in his youth?—[*Serious Call*, p. 329.]

THE PROUD MAN

IF selfish pride is the spirit of our life, everything is only seen and felt and known through this glass. Everything is dark, senseless, and absurd to the proud man but that which brings food to this spirit. He understands nothing, he feels nothing, he tastes nothing, but as his pride is made sensible of it, or capable of being affected with it. His working will, which is the life of his soul, lives and works only in the element of pride; and, therefore, what suits his pride is his only good, and what contradicts his pride is all the evil that he can feel or know. His wit, his parts, his learning, his advancement, his friends, his admirers, his successes, his conquests, all these are the only God and Heaven that he has any living sensibility of. He, indeed, can talk of a Scripture God, a Scripture Christ and Heaven, but these are only the ornamental furniture of his brain, whilst pride is the God of his heart. We are told that God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble. This is not to be understood as if God, by an arbitrary will, only chose to deal thus with the proud and humble man. Oh, no; the true ground is this: the resistance is on the part of man. Pride resisteth God, it rejects Him, it turns from Him, and chooses to worship and adore something else instead of Him; whereas humility leaves all for

God, falls down before Him and opens all the doors of the heart for His entrance into it. This is the only sense in which God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. And thus it is in the true ground and reason of every good and evil that rises up in us; we have neither good nor evil but as it is the natural effect of the workings of our own will, either with or against God, and God only interposes with His threatenings and instructions to direct us to a right use of our wills, that we may not blindly work ourselves into death instead of life.—[*The Spirit of Prayer*, Part II. p. 112.]

AN APPEAL.

ALL this, Academicus, to make it known through all the regions of eternity, that pride can degrade the highest angels into devils, and humility raise fallen flesh and blood to the throne of angels. This, this is the great end of God's raising a new creation out of a fallen kingdom of angels; for this end it stands in its state of war, a war betwixt the fire and pride of fallen angels, and the meekness and humility of the Lamb of God. It stands its thousands of years in this strife, that the last trumpet may sound *this* great truth through all heights and depths of eternity, that evil can have no beginning but from pride, nor any end but from humility. O Academicus, what a blindness there is in the world! What a stir is there among mankind about religion, and yet almost all seem to be afraid of that in which alone is salvation! Poor mortals! What is the one wish and desire of your hearts? What is it that you call happiness and matter of rejoicing? Is it not when everything about you helps you to stand upon higher ground, gives full nourishment to self-esteem, and gratifies every pride of life? and yet life itself is the loss of everything, unless pride be overcome. Oh, stop a while in contemplation of this great truth. It is a truth as unchangeable as God; it is written and spoken through all nature; heaven and earth, fallen angels, and redeemed men, all bear witness to it.

The truth is this:—Pride must die in you or nothing of heaven can live in you. Under the banner of this truth give up yourselves to the meek and humble Spirit of the Holy Jesus, the Overcomer of all fire and pride and wrath. This is the One Way, the One Truth, and the One Life. There is no other open door into the sheepfold of God. Everything else is the working of the devil in the fallen nature of man. Humility must sow the seed, or there can be no reaping in heaven. Look not at pride only as an unbecoming temper; not at humility only as a decent virtue; for the one is death, and the other is life; the one is all hell, and the other is all heaven. So much as you have of pride, so much you have of the fallen angel alive in you; so much as you have of true humility, so much you have of the Lamb of God within you. Could you see with your eyes what every stirring of pride does to your soul, you would beg of everything you meet to tear the viper from you, though with the loss of a hand or an eye. Could you see what a sweet, divine, transforming power there is in humility, what a heavenly water of life it gives to the fiery breath of your soul, how it expels the poison of your fallen nature, and makes room for the Spirit of God to live in you, you would rather wish to be the footstool of all the world than to want the smallest degree of it. Excuse, Academicus, this little digression, if it be such, for the subject we were upon forced me into it.

Academicus.—Indeed, sir, the lesson you have here given is the same that the whole nature of the fall of angels, and the whole nature of the redemption of man, daily reads to every creature; and He, Who alone can redeem the world, has plainly showed us wherein the life and spirit of our redemption must consist, when He saith, 'Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart.' Now if this lesson is unlearnt, we must be said to have left our Master as those disciples did who went back and walked no more with Him. But if you please, Theophilus, we will now break off till the afternoon.—[*The Spirit of Prayer*, Part II. p. 52.]

ENVY

EMULATION AND ENVY

ENVY is acknowledged by all people to be the most ungenerous, base, and wicked passion that can enter into the heart of man. And is this a temper to be instilled, nourished, and established in the minds of young people? I know it is said that it is not envy but emulation that is intended to be awakened in the minds of young men. But this is vainly said. For when children are taught to bear no rival, and to scorn to be outdone by any of their age, they are plainly and directly taught to be envious. For it is impossible for any one to have this scorn of being outdone, and this contention with rivals, without burning with envy against all those that seem to excel him or get any distinction from him. So that what children are taught is rank envy, and only covered with a name of a less odious sound. If envy is thus confessedly bad, and it be only emulation that is endeavoured to be awakened in children, surely there ought to be great care taken that children may know the one from the other, that they may abominate the one as a great crime, whilst they give the other admission into their minds. But if this were to be attempted, the fineness of the distinction betwixt envy and emulation would show that it was easier to divide them in words than to separate them in action. For emulation, when it is defined in its best manner, is nothing else but a refinement upon envy, or rather the most plausible part of that black and venomous passion. And though it is easy to separate them in the notion, yet the most acute philosopher, that understands the art of distinguishing ever so well, if he gives

himself up to emulation, will certainly find himself deep in envy. For envy is not an original temper, but the natural, necessary, and unavoidable effect of emulation, or a desire of glory. So that he who establishes the one in the minds of people necessarily fixes the other there. And there is no other possible way of destroying envy but by destroying emulation, or a desire of glory For the one always rises and falls in proportion to the other. I know it is said in defence of this method of education that ambition and a desire of glory are necessary to excite young people to industry; and that if we were to press upon them the doctrines of humility we should deject their minds, and sink them into dulness and idleness. But these people who say this do not consider that this reason, if it has any strength, is full as strong against pressing the doctrines of humility upon grown men, lest we should deject their minds and sink them into dulness and idleness. For who does not see that middle-aged men want as much the assistance of pride, ambition, and vain-glory, to spur them up to action and industry, as children do? And it is very certain that the precepts of humility are more contrary to the designs of such men, and more grievous to their minds, when they are pressed upon them, than they are to the minds of young persons. This reason, therefore, that is given, why children should not be trained up in the principles of true humility, is as good a reason why the same humility should never be required of grown men. Let those people who think that children would be spoiled if they were not thus educated, consider this. Could they think that if any children had been educated by our Blessed Lord, or His holy apostles, that their minds would have been sunk into dulness and idleness? Or could they think that such children would not have been trained up in the profoundest principles of a strict and true humility? Can they say that our Blessed Lord, Who was the meekest and humblest Man that ever was on earth, was hindered by His humility from being

the greatest example of worthy and glorious actions that ever were done by man? Can they say that His apostles, who lived in the humble spirit of their Master, did therefore cease to be laborious and active instruments of doing good to all the world? A few such reflections as these are sufficient to expose all the poor pretences for an education in pride and ambition. . . . When at any time you find in your heart motions of envy towards any person, whether on account of his riches, power, reputation, learning, or advancement, if you should immediately betake yourself at that time to your prayers, and pray to God to bless and prosper him in that very thing which raised your envy; if you should express and repeat your petitions in the strongest terms, beseeching God to grant him all the happiness from the enjoyment of it that can possibly be received, you would soon find it to be the best antidote in the world to expel the venom of that poisonous passion.—[*Serious Call*, pp. 331, 427.]

COVETOUSNESS

BREADTH AND DEPTH OF COVETOUSNESS

THEOPHILUS.—Tell me now, have I enough proved to you the short, simple, and certain way of destroying that body of self which lives and works in the four elements of covetousness, envy, pride, and wrath?

THEOGENES.—Enough, of all reason. But as to covetousness, I thank God I cannot charge myself with it; it has no power over me, nay, I naturally abhor it. And I also now clearly see why I have been so long struggling in vain against other selfish tempers.

THEOPHILUS.—Permit me, my friend, to remove your mistake. Had covetousness no power over you, you could have no other selfish tempers to struggle against. They are all dead, as soon as covetousness has done working in you. You take covetousness to relate only to the wealth of this world. But this is but one single branch of it; its nature is as large as desire, and wherever selfish desire is, there is all the evil nature of covetousness. Now envy, pride, hatred, or wrath can have no possibility of existence in you, but because there is some selfish desire alive in you that is not satisfied, not gratified, but resisted or disappointed. And therefore, so long as any selfish tempers, whether of envy, uneasiness, complaint, pride, or wrath are alive in you, you have the fullest proof that all these tempers are born and bred in and from your own covetousness, that is, from that same selfish bad desire which, when it is turned to the wealth of this world, is called covetousness. For all these four elements of self are fallen nature, are tied together in one inseparable band, they mutually generate, and are generated from one another, they have but one common life, and

must all of them live or all die together. This may show you again the absolute necessity of our one simple and certain way of dying to self, and the absolute iusufficiency of all human means whatever to effect it. . . .

THEOGENES.—What a blindness was it in me, to think that I had no covetousness because the love of pelf was not felt by me! For to covet is to desire. And what can it signify whether I desire this or that? If I desire anything but that which God would have me to be and do, I stick in the mire of covetousness, and must have all that evil and disquiet living and working in me, which robs misers of their peace both with God and man. Oh, sweet resignation of myself to God, happy death of every selfish desire, blessed unction of a holy life, the only driver of all evil out of my soul, be thou my guide and governor wherever I go! Nothing but thou canst take me from myself; nothing but thou canst lead me to God; hell has no power where thou art, nor can heaven hide itself from thee. Oh, may I never indulge a thought, bring forth a word, or do any thing for myself or others, but under the influence of thy blessed inspiration! Forgive, dear Theophilus, this transport of my soul: I could not stop it. The sight, though distant, of this heavenly Canaan, this sabbath of the soul, freed from the miserable labour of self, to rest in meekness, humility, patience, and resignation under the Spirit of God, is like the joyful voice of the Bridegroom to my soul, and leaves no wish in me but to be at the marriage-feast of the Lamb.—[*The Spirit of Love*, Part II. pp. 220, 230.]

WORLDLINESS

THE WHOLE WORLD LIETH IN WICKEDNESS

AND this is the true ground and reason why an outward morality, a decency and beauty of life and conduct with respect to this world arising only from a worldly spirit, has nothing of salvation in it. He that has his virtue only from this world is only a trader of this world, and can only have a worldly benefit from it. For it is an undoubted truth, that everything is necessarily bounded by, or kept within the sphere of, its own activity; and therefore to expect heavenly effects from a worldly spirit is nonsense. As water cannot rise higher in its streams than the spring from whence it cometh, so no actions can ascend further in their efficacy, or rise higher in their value, than the spirit from whence they proceed. The spirit that comes from heaven is always in heaven, and whatsoever it does, tends to and reaches heaven. The spirit that arises from this world is always in it; it is as worldly when it gives alms, or prays in the church, as when it makes bargains in the market. When therefore the gospel saith he that gives alms to be seen of men hath his reward, it is grounded on this general truth, that every thing, every shape, or kind, or degree of virtue that arises from the spirit of this world, has nothing to expect but that which it can receive from this world; for every action must have its nature and efficacy according to the spirit from whence it proceeds. He that loves to see a crucifix, a worthless image, solely from this principle, because from his heart he embraces Christ as his suffering Lord and pattern, does an action poor and needless in itself, which yet by the spirit from whence it proceeds reaches heaven, and helps to kindle the

heavenly life in the soul. On the other hand, he that from a selfish heart, a worldly spirit, a love of esteem, distinguishes himself by the most rational virtues of an exemplary life, has only a piety that may be reckoned amongst the perishable things of this world.—[*An Appeal to all that Doubt*, p. 93.]

THE CORRUPTED CURRENTS OF THE WORLD

THEOPHILUS.—I shall only add, before we pass on to another point, that from what has been said of the first state and fall of man, it plainly follows, that the sin of all sins, or the heresy of all heresies, is a worldly spirit. We are apt to consider this temper only as an infirmity, or pardonable failure; but it is indeed the great apostasy from God and the Divine Life. It is not a single sin, but the whole nature of all sin, that leaves no possibility of coming out of our fallen state, till it be totally renounced with all the strength of our hearts. Every sin, be it of what kind it will, is only a branch of the worldly spirit that lives in us. There is but One that is good, saith our Lord, and that is God. In the same strictness of expression it must be said, there is but one life that is good, and that is the Life of God in heaven. Depart in the least degree from the Goodness of God, and you depart into evil; because nothing is Good but His Goodness. Choose any life but the Life of God in Heaven, and you choose death; for death is nothing else but the loss of the Life of God. The creatures of this world have but one life, and that is the life of this world. This is their one life and one good. Eternal beings have but one life and one good, and that is the Life of God. The spirit of the soul is in itself nothing else but a spirit breathed forth from the Life of God, and for this only end, that the Life of God, the Nature of God, the Working of God, the Tempers of God, might be manifested in it. God could not create man to have a will of his own, and a life of his own, different from the life and will that is in Himself; this is more impossible than for a good tree to bring forth corrupt fruit. God can only delight in His own

Life, His own Goodness, and His own Perfections; and therefore cannot love or delight or dwell in any creatures but where His own Goodness and Perfections are to be found. Like can only unite with like, heaven with heaven, and hell with hell; and therefore the Life of God must be the life of the soul, if the soul is to unite with God. Hence it is, that all the religion of fallen man, all the methods of our redemption, have only this one end, to take from us that strange and earthly life we have got by the fall, and to kindle again the Life of God and heaven in our souls; not to deliver us from that gross and sordid vice called covetousness, which heathens can condemn, but to take the whole spirit of this world entirely from us, and that for this necessary reason, because all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, that is, is not that life, or spirit of life, which we had from God by our creation, but is of this world, is brought into us by our fall from God into the life of this world. And therefore a worldly spirit is not to be considered as a single sin, or as something that may consist with some real degrees of Christian goodness, but as a state of real death to the Kingdom and Life of God in our souls. Management, prudence, or an artful trimming betwixt God and Mammon, are here all in vain; it is not only the grossness of an outward visible, worldly behaviour, but the spirit, the prudence, the subtlety, the wisdom of this world, that is our separation from the Life of God. Hold this therefore, Academicus, as a certain truth, that the heresy of all heresies is a worldly spirit. It is the whole nature and misery of our fall; it keeps up the death of our souls, and so long as it lasts makes it impossible for us to be born again from above. It is the greatest blindness and darkness of our nature, and keeps us in the grossest ignorance both of heaven and hell. For though they are both of them within us, yet we feel neither the one nor the other so long as the spirit of this world reigns in us. Light and truth and the gospel, so far as they concern eternity, are all

empty sounds to the worldly spirit. His own good and his own evil govern all his hopes and fears; and therefore he can have no religion, or be further concerned in it, than so far as it can be made serviceable to the life of this world. Publicans and harlots are all born of the spirit of this world; but its highest birth are the scribes, and Pharisees, and hypocrites, who turn godliness into gain, and serve God for the sake of Mammon; these live, and move, and have their being in and from the spirit of this world. Of all things therefore, my friend, detest the spirit of this world, or there is no help; you must live and die an utter stranger to all that is divine and heavenly. You will go out of the world in the same poverty and death to the divine life in which you entered into it. For a worldly earthly spirit can know nothing of God; it can know nothing, feel nothing, taste nothing, delight in nothing, but with earthly senses, and after an earthly manner. The natural man, saith the Apostle, receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, they are foolishness unto him. He cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned; that is, they can only be discerned by that spirit which he has not. . . .

EVEN HEATHENS HATED IT

Theophilus.—Indeed, Academicus, there is hardly any knowing when one has said enough of the evil effects of a worldly spirit. It is the canker that eats up all the fruits of our other good tempers; it leaves no degree of goodness in them, but transforms all that we are, or do, into its own earthly nature. The philosophers of old began all their virtue in a total renunciation of the spirit of this world. They saw with the eyes of heaven, that darkness was not more contrary to light than the wisdom of this world was contrary to the spirit of virtue; therefore they allowed of no progress in virtue but so far as a man had overcome himself and the spirit of this world. This gave a divine solidity to all their instructions, and proved them to be masters of true wisdom. But the doctrine of the Cross of Christ, the last, the highest, the most finishing stroke given to the spirit of this

world, that speaks more in one word than all the philosophy of voluminous writers, is yet professed by those who are in more friendship with the world than was allowed to the disciples of Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, or Epictetus. Nay, if those ancient sages were to start up among us with their divine wisdom, they would bid fair to be treated by the sons of the gospel, if not by some fathers of the church, as dreaming enthusiasts.

THE GREAT APOSTASY

But, Academicus, this is a standing truth; the world can only love its own, and wisdom can only be justified of her children. The heaven-born Epictetus told one of his scholars, that then he might first look upon himself as having made some true proficiency in virtue when the world took him for a fool; an oracle like that which said, The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. If you was to ask me what is the apostasy of these last times, or whence is all the degeneracy of the present Christian Church, I should place it all in a worldly spirit. If here you see open wickedness, there only forms of godliness; if here superficial holiness, political piety, crafty prudence, there haughty sanctity, partial zeal, envious orthodoxy; if almost everywhere you see a Jewish blindness and hardness of heart, and the church trading with the gospel as the old Jews bought and sold beasts in their temple; all these are only so many forms and proper fruits of the worldly spirit. This is the great net with which the devil becomes a fisher of men; and be assured of this, my friend, that every son of man is in this net, till through and by the Spirit of Christ he breaks out of it.—[*The Spirit of Prayer*, Part II. pp. 105, 115.]

INFIDELITY

A SHORT WAY WITH INFIDELS

THEOPHILUS.—But pray, gentlemen, who is this Humanus? I do not remember to have seen him before: he seems not willing to speak, yet is often biting his lips at what is said.

RUSTICUS.—This Humanus, sir, is my neighbour; but so ignorant of the nature of the gospel, that he is often trying to persuade me into a disbelief of it. I say ignorant (though he is a learned man) because I am well assured that no man ever did, or can oppose the gospel, but through a total ignorance of what it is in itself: for the gospel, when rightly understood, is irresistible; it brings more good news to the human nature than sight to the blind, limbs to the lame, health to the sick, or liberty to the condemned slave. But this neighbour of mine has never yet been in sight of the truth as it is in the gospel; he knows nothing of the grounds and reason of it, but what he has picked up out of books that have been written against it and for it. He often makes use of one maxim of the gospel to overthrow it, and wonders that so plain and honest a man as I am will not submit to it. He says, if it be a truth, as the gospel saith, that the tree must be known by its fruit, and that a good tree cannot bring forth corrupt fruit, we need only look at the lives of Christians, the craft of priests, the wars, contentions, hatreds, sects, parties, heresies, divisions, outrages, and persecutions, which Christianity has brought forth, we need only look at this, to have all our senses and reason assure us that the gospel must be a bad tree. But this is enough concerning the man. He comes with me at his

own earnest desire, which has lately seized him, and upon his own strict promise not to interrupt our conversation, but to be a silent hearer till it is all over. And therefore, if you please, sir, I beg our conversation may for a while turn upon the chief points asserted in *The Spirit of Prayer* for two reasons: first, that Academicus may see what reasons I had for saying that book had given me a sufficient instruction; and also that Humanus, hearing these great points, may hear the whole ground and nature, the necessity and blessedness of the Christian redemption, set forth in such a degree of light, and truth, and amiableness, as he had no notion of before.

THEOPHILUS.—Your neighbour is welcome, and I pray God to give him a heart attentive to those truths which have made so good an impression upon you. . . .

THE SPIRIT OF BONDAGE

RUSTICUS.—I have brought again with me, gentlemen, my silent friend, Humanus, and upon the same condition of being silent still. But though his silence is the same, he is quite altered. For this twenty years I have known him to be of an even, cheerful temper, full of good-nature, and even quite calm and dispassionate in his attacks upon Christianity, never provoked by what was said either against his infidelity, or in defence of the gospel. He used to boast of his being free from those sour passions and resentments, which, he said, were so easy to be seen in many or most defenders of the gospel-meekness. But now he is morose, peevish, and full of chagrin, and seems to be as uneasy with himself as with everybody else: whatever he says is rash, satirical, and wrathful. I tell him, but he will not own it, that his case is this: the truth has touched him; but it is only so far as to be his tormentor. It is only as welcome to him as a thief that has taken from him all his riches, goods, and armour wherein he trusted. The Christianity he used to oppose is vanished; and therefore all the weapons he had against it are dropped out of his hands. It now appears to stand upon another ground, to have a

deeper bottom, and better nature, than what he imagined; and therefore he and his scheme of infidelity are quite disconcerted. But though his arguments have thus lost all their strength, yet his heart is left in the state it was; it stands in the same opposition to Christianity as it did before, and yet without any ideas of his brain to support it. And this is the true ground of his present uneasy, peevish state of mind. He has nothing now to subsist upon but the resolute hardness of his heart, his pride and obstinacy. These he cannot give up by the force of his reason; his heart cannot bear the thoughts of such a sacrifice; and yet he feels and knows that he has no strength left, but in a settled hardness, pride, and obstinacy to continue as he is. These, I own, are severe and hard words: but, hard as they are, I am sure Humanus knows that they proceed from the softness and affection of my heart towards him, from a compassionate zeal to shew him where his malady lies, and the necessity of overcoming himself before he can have the blessing of light, and truth, and peace. Though it is with some reluctance, yet I have chosen thus to make my neighbour known both to himself and to you, that you may speak of such matters as may give the best relief to the state he is in.

THROES OF THE NEW BIRTH

Theophilus.—Indeed, Rusticus, I much approve of the spirit you have here shewn with regard to your friend, and hope he will take in good part all that you have said. As for me, I embrace him with the utmost tenderness of affection, I feel and compassionate the trying state of his heart, and have only this one wish, that I could pour the heavenly water of meekness and the oil of Divine Love into it. Let us force him to know that we are the messengers of Divine Love to him; that we seek not ourselves, nor our own victory, but to make him victorious over his own evil, and become possessed of a new life in God. His trial is the greatest and hardest that belongs to human nature, and yet it is absolutely necessary to be undergone. Nature must become a

torment and burden to itself before it can willingly give itself up to that death through which alone it can pass into life. There is no true and real conversion, whether it be from infidelity or any other life of sin, till a man comes to know and feel that nothing less than his whole nature is to be parted with, and yet find in himself no possibility of doing it. This is the inability that can bring us at last to say with the apostle, When I am weak, then am I strong. This is the distress that stands near to the gate of life; this is the despair by which we lose all our own life, to find a new one in God. For here, in this place it is, that faith, and hope, and true seeking to God and Christ are born. But till all is despair in ourselves, till all is lost that we had any trust in as our own; till then, faith and hope, and turning to God in prayer are only things learnt and practised by rule and method; but they are not born in us, are not living qualities of a new birth, till we have done feeling any trust or confidence in ourselves. Happy, therefore, is it for your friend Humanus, that he is come thus far, that everything is taken from him on which he trusted, and found content in himself. In this state, one sigh, one look, or the least turning of his heart to God for help, would be the beginning of his salvation. Let us, therefore, try to improve this happy moment to him, not so much by arguments of reason, as by the arrows of that Divine Love which overflows all nature and creature. For Humanus, though hitherto without Christ, is still within the reach of Divine Love: he belongs to God; God created him for Himself, to be an habitation of His Own Life, Light, and Holy Spirit; and God has brought him and us together, that the lost sheep may be found and brought back to its Heavenly Shepherd. Oh Humanus, love is my bait; you must be caught by it; it will put its hook into your heart, and force you to know that of all strong things nothing is so strong, so irresistible, as Divine Love.—[*The Spirit of Prayer*, Part II. pp. 25, 123.

HUMANUS.—Oh Theophilus, I must yield, and it is with great pleasure that I now enter into conversation with you. You have taken from me all power of cavilling and disputing. I have no opinions that I choose to maintain, but have the utmost desire of entering further into this field of light, which you have so clearly opened to my view. I shall not trouble you with the relation of what has passed in my soul, nor what struggles I have had with that variety of heathenish notions which have had their turn in my mind. It is better to tell you that they are dead and buried, or rather consumed to nothing by that new light which you have opened in so many great points that I was quite a stranger to before. To reject all that you have said concerning the fall of angels, the original of this world, the creation and fall of man, and the necessity of a redemption as great as that of the Gospel, is impossible; nothing can do it, or stand out against it, but the most wilful and blind obstinacy. . . . EPHPHATHA

For I had frequently a consciousness rising up within me, that the debate was equally vain on both sides, doing no more real good to the one than to the other, not being able to imagine that a set of scholastic, logical opinions about history, facts, doctrines, and institutions of the Church, or a set of logical objections against them, were of any significancy towards making the soul of man either an eternal angel of heaven, or an eternal devil of hell. And therefore it was that I was often tempted rather to think there was neither heaven nor hell, than to believe that such a variety of churches and systems of opinion, all condemning, and all condemned by one another, were to find the heaven of God opened to receive them, but he who was equally led by opinion to reject them all, was doomed to hell. But you, sir (and how can I enough thank you for it?), have put a full end to all this vain strife of opinions floating in the brain; you have dispersed the clouds that surrounded my bewildered mind; you have brought me home to myself, where I find heaven and hell, life and death, salvation

and damnation at strife within me; you have shewn me the infinite worth of Christianity and the dreadful nature of infidelity, not by helping me to a new opinion for my reason to maintain, but by proving to me this great and decisive truth, that Christianity is neither more nor less than the goodness of the Divine Life, Light, and Love, living and working in my soul; and that infidelity in its whole nature is purely and solely the heart of man living in, governed by, and contented with, the evil workings of the earthly life, spirit, and nature. This is the infidelity that you have forced me to fly from, and renounce, and that is the Christianity to which I am converted with all the strength of my heart and spirit. Away, then, with all the fictions and workings of reason, either for or against Christianity! They are only the wanton sport of the mind, whilst ignorant of God, and insensible of its own nature and condition. Death and life are the only things in question: life is God living and working in the soul; death is the soul living and working according to the sense and reason of bestial flesh and blood. Both this life and this death are of their own growth, growing from their own seed within us, not as busy reason talks or directs, but as our heart turns either to the one or the other. But, dear Theophilus, I must now tell you that I want to make haste in this new road you have put me in. Time is short; I am afraid of leaving the world before I have left all worldly tempers, and before the first holy and heavenly birth be quickened and brought to life in me. . . . This is the true height, and depth, and total strength of deism or infidelity; it never had any other support in myself but this, nor did I ever converse with a deist who carried the matter higher or further than this to support the cause. Hence it is that you made so speedy a convert of me, by showing me such a Christianity as I never heard of before, and stript of everything that gave me power to oppose it. Had you proceeded in the way practised by most defenders of the Gospel,

you had left me just as you found me, if not more confirmed in my old way. But as you have justly removed all controversy about doctrines from the merits of the cause, and shown that it all lies in this one short, plain, and decisive point, namely, the fall of man; a fall proved and demonstrated to all my senses and reason by every height and depth of nature, by every kind of misery, evil, and sin in the world, by everything we know of God, ourselves, and the world we live in; the ground and foundation of Christianity is undeniable, and no one can be too speedy a convert to the belief of it. And as you have also shown that the whole nature of the Gospel redemption means nothing but the one, true, and only possible way of delivering man from his miserable state in this world, Christianity is shown to be the most intelligible and desirable thing that the heart of man can think of. And thus, contrary to all expectation, the tables are quite turned; deism can no longer be founded on argument, and Christianity is as self-evident as our senses: all learning on both sides, either for or against it, is insignificant. Christianity stands upon a bottom quite superior to it, and may be the sure possession of every plain man who has sense enough to know whether he is happy or unhappy, good or evil. For this natural knowledge, if adhered to, is every man's sure guide to that one salvation preached by the gospel.—[*The Way to Divine Knowledge*, pp. 1, 16, 71.]

PUTTING OUT OUR OWN EYES

AND now, my dear reader, what shall I say to you? How shall I do that which I most of all desire to do,—touch your heart? Or how can your heart be untouched with this affecting view of the mercies of God in Christ Jesus, and of the riches and treasures which lie hid in your own soul, wanting nothing but your own consent and good wishes to be manifested in you? But, it may be, modern infidelity has stole into your heart, and so you lie starving in the midst of plenty, choosing

rather to famish on the dry husks of reason, dispute, and infidelity, than to have this Divine Life, this riches of your own soul, discovered to you on the terms of the gospel. It may be you have buried this spark of life, this inward man, and have heaped all the earth upon him that you can get, that you have sealed the stone of his sepulchre, and have set your greatest enemy, a reasoning infidelity, upon the watch, to dispute, wrangle, and deny every doctrine of Scripture that as a good angel would roll away the stone of the sepulchre and let your inward Redeemer arise in you. If this is your case, if you have let a reasoning infidelity into your heart, you know not what mischief you have let into it; for the denial of the gospel reaches much further and is more extensive than you imagine. For to deny Jesus Christ is to deny your share in the first pardon of God to man; it is returning into the first state of the fall, and refusing to be a partner with Adam in his state of forgiveness; it is going over to the side of the serpent, and declaring that you will not enter into peace with God on the terms of bruising his head; for Jesus Christ that calls upon you in the gospel is that same Christ which became Adam's pardon; and if you reject Him in the gospel, it is rejecting Him from the beginning; and is saying that you will have no share in that salvation which was granted to Adam, and in him to all mankind. Nay, what is still more, if you reject the Saviour offered to you in the gospel, you reject all that which makes you differ from a devil; for that Saviour which speaks to you in the gospel is that very same inward light of your mind which makes you now differ from a devil; for had you nothing of that Jesus Christ in you, Whom you reject in the gospel, you would be in the same dark malignity, and self-tormenting wretchedness, in which every diabolical nature is. To refuse Him that speaketh to you in the gospel is not barely to renounce a certain particular religion revealed by God at a certain time; it is not barely to reject Christ as come in the flesh;

but it is rejecting all that God has ever transacted with man, it is renouncing all that is divine and good within you, all that God inwardly speaks and teaches in the depth of your soul; it is saying that you will have no benefit from the good workings or motions of your own heart, or the instinct of goodness that are stirring in it; for Jesus Christ that calls you to repentance in the gospel is the very same blessed Saviour that warns, reproves, and preaches repentance in the inmost essence of your spirit. For it is a deceit of the grossest kind to think that Christ came only as our Saviour when He came into the flesh, or that He only speaks to us that which is outwardly spoken in the gospel; for He always was that in every man that saved him from being entirely a diabolical nature, and always was as really the Teacher and Mover of all that is good within you, as He was the Teacher of the Gospel. Therefore to reject Him as your Saviour, to refuse Him as such, and to desire to be without Him, is in reality to desire to be in hell, to have the darkness and distress of diabolical beings; it is desiring to be without any Light of God upon your mind, or any instincts of goodness stirring in your heart. And if this is not the immediate effect of your infidelity, if you don't immediately find that the denial of Christ is putting out all the light within you; 'tis because Christ is Love, and will be so good towards you as to continue His Inward Light to you, though you reject His Outward Light of the gospel. But, my friend, be wise in time, for this goodness will continue but a time; don't let a poor worthless infidelity beguile you to eat the dust of the earth with the serpent, when God has provided for you the Bread of Life. For this time of goodness and forbearance will soon be over; and if the end of it finds you in your infidelity, rejecting the benefits of Christ, you will then see the whole of all you desired, you will be without Christ, you will find that all is gone with Him, and that you will have nothing left but that nature which is the torment of hell. . . .

HE CAME TO HIS OWN

Infidelity, therefore, is a much deeper evil than you may imagine; it denies and rejects more than you think of; you may intend by it only to change the light of the gospel for the light of reason, but Christ will not be divided by your intention; He is the one only Light of men, the same in the heart that He is in the gospel; and though you may now think that you have two teachers, because He teaches in two places, and therefore may adhere to one and reject the other; yet this is a deceit that can last no longer than the disputings of this world last with you. When the veil of flesh and blood is pulled off, and you must stand in the nakedness of your soul before God, then you will know that these two lights are only one, and that neither of them can be rejected by itself. These lights appear now as two, only because God is so good as to leave no part of you untried, but presses the kingdom of heaven upon you, both from within and from without. The Eternal Word, the Son of God, took human nature upon Him, worked all His miracles, taught all His doctrines, underwent all His sufferings, to make that light of the mind which every man that cometh into the world had received from Him effectual to their salvation; therefore the light of the gospel and the light of the mind are one, as Christ is one, whether He speaks to you inwardly or outwardly. If, therefore, you reject Christ in the utmost efforts of His goodness to save you, you will find that the renouncing of Christ is renouncing all that you have from Him, and that all the good light of your mind—call it what you will, as it was His—is all rejected with Him, and that nothing is left in that soul where He is not but mere darkness. . . .

AM I YOUR ENEMY?

Awake, therefore, my dear friend, and cast away this religion from you with more earnestness than you would cast burning coals out of your bosom; for could it only destroy your body, I should have been less earnest in giving you notice of it. But as I have the fullest conviction that it is the death and darkness of your soul and is bringing the essence of hell secretly and invisibly into it,

you must forgive me if I use all the expressions and descriptions I can think of to prevent your giving in to it. Had I a superficial charity for you, or a slight view of the hurt you are doing to yourself, I should speak to you accordingly; but the depth and earnestness of my desire to do you good must have expressions suitable to it. Study not, therefore, how to find fault with me, or to dislike the words or manner of my style, for it is the style of love and zeal for your salvation; and if you condemn anything but love in it, you condemn something that is not there. . . . Don't, therefore, my dear friend, deceive yourself, nor let any one else deceive you. The matter is of infinite consequence that you have before you. You come into the world but once, and have but one trial, but the effects of it are to last for ever. The time of disputing and speculating upon ideas is short; it can last no longer than whilst the sun of this world can refresh your flesh and blood, and so keep the soul from knowing its own depth or what has been growing in it. But when this is over, then you must know and feel what it is to have a nature as deep and strong and large as eternity.—[*A Demonstration, etc.*, pp. 173, 195, 232.]

THE SECOND ADAM

THE LAST ADAM A QUICKENING SPIRIT

BUT let us now change the scene and behold the wonders of a new creation where all things are called out of the curse and death of sin and created again to life in Christ Jesus; where all mankind are chosen and appointed to the recovery of their first glorious life by a new birth from a Second Adam, Who, as an universal Redeemer, takes the place of the first fallen father of mankind, and so gives life and immortality and heaven to all that lost them in Adam. God, according to the riches of His love, raised a man out of the loins of Adam, in whose mysterious person the whole humanity and the Word of God were personally united; that same Word which had been reserved and treasured up in Adam at his fall as a secret Bruiser of the serpent and real Beginning of his salvation; so that in this Second Adam God and man were One Person. And in this union of the Divine and human nature lies the foundation and possibility of our recovery. For thus the holy Jesus became qualified to be the Second Adam, or universal Regenerator of all that are born of Adam the first. For being Himself that Deity, which as a spark or seed of life was given to Adam, thus all that were born of Adam had also a birth from Him, and so stood under Him as their common Father and Regenerator of a heavenly life in them. And it was this Word of Life which was preserved and treasured up in Adam that makes all mankind to be the spiritual children of the Second Adam, though He was not born into the world till so many years after the fall. For seeing the same Word that became their perfect Redeemer in the fulness of time was in them from the beginning

as a beginning of their redemption, therefore He stood related to all mankind as a Fountain and Deriver of an Heavenly Life into them in the same universal manner as Adam was the fountain and deriver of a miserable mortality into them. And seeing also this great and glorious Redeemer had in Himself the whole humanity, both as it was before and after the fall, viz., in His inward man the perfection of the first Adam, and in His outward the weakness and mortality of the fallen nature; and seeing He had all this, as the Undoer of all that Adam had done, as the Overcomer of death, as the Former and Raiser of our Heavenly Life, therefore it was that all His conquests over this world, sin, death, and hell were not the conquests of a single person that terminated in Himself, but had their real effect and efficacious merit through all human nature, because He was the appointed Father and Regenerator of the whole human nature, and as such had the same relation to it all as Adam had. And, therefore, as Adam's fall, sin, and death did not, could not, terminate in himself, because he was our appointed father, from whom we must have such a state and condition of life as he had; so the righteousness, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ into the kingdom of heaven did not terminate in Himself, but became ours, because He is our appointed Second Adam, from Whom we are to derive such a state and condition of life as He had; and, therefore, all that are born again of Him are certainly born into His state of victory and triumph over the world, sin, death, and hell.—[*An Appeal to all that Doubt*, p. 187.]

I AM the Vine, ye are the branches. Here Christ, our Second Adam, uses this similitude to teach us that the new birth that we are to have from Him is real in the most strict and literal sense of the words, and that there is the same nearness of relation betwixt Him and His true disciples that there is betwixt the vine and its branches, that He does all that in us and for us which the vine

I HAVE USED SIMILITUDES

does to its branches. Now, the life of the vine must be really derived into the branches; they cannot be branches till the birth of the vine is brought forth in them. And, therefore, as sure as the birth of the vine must be brought forth in the branches, so sure is it that we must be born again of our Second Adam; and that unless the life of the holy Jesus be in us by a birth from Him, we are as dead to Him and the Kingdom of God as the branch is dead to the vine from which it is broken off. Again, our blessed Saviour says: Without Me ye can do nothing. The question is, when, or how, a man may be said to be without Christ? Consider again the vine and its branches. A branch can then only be said to be without its vine when the vegetable life of the vine is no longer in it. This is the only sense in which we can be said to be without Christ; when He is no longer in us as a Principle of a Heavenly Life, we are then without Him, and so can do nothing; that is, nothing that is good or holy. A Christ not in us is the same thing as a Christ not ours. If we are only so far with Christ as to own and receive the history of His birth, person, and character, if this is all that we have of Him, we are as much without Him, as much left to ourselves, as little helped by Him, as those evil spirits which cried out, We know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God. For those evil spirits, and all the fallen angels, are totally without Christ, have no benefit from Him, for this one and only reason, because Christ is not in them, nothing of the Son of God is generated or born in them. Therefore every son of Adam that has not something of the Son of God generated or born within him is as much without Christ, as destitute of all help from Him, as those evil spirits who could only make an outward confession of Him. It is the language of Scripture that Christ in us is our hope of glory: that Christ formed in us, living, growing, and raising His own Life and Spirit in us, is our only salvation. And, indeed, all this is plain from the nature of the thing; for since the serpent, sin, death, and hell

are all essentially within us, the very growth of our nature, must not our redemption be equally inward, an inward essential death to this state of our souls, and an inward growth of a contrary life within us? If Adam was only an outward person, if his whole nature was not our nature, born in us, and derived from him into us, it would be nonsense to say that his fall is our fall. So in like manner, if Christ, our Second Adam, was only an outward Person, if He entered not as deeply into our nature as the first Adam does, if we have not as really from Him a new inward spiritual man as we have outward flesh and blood from Adam, what ground could there be to say that our righteousness is from Him, as our sin is from Adam? Let no one here think to charge me with disregard to the Holy Jesus Who was born of the Virgin Mary, or with setting up an inward Saviour in opposition to that outward Christ Whose history is recorded in the gospel. No: it is with the utmost fulness of faith and assurance that I ascribe all our redemption to that Blessed and Mysterious Person that was then born of the Virgin Mary, and will assert no inward redemption but what wholly proceeds from, and is effected by, that life-giving Redeemer Who died on the cross for our redemption. Was I to say that a plant or vegetable must have the sun within it, must have the life, light, and virtues of the sun incorporated in it, that it has no benefit from the sun till the sun is thus inwardly forming, generating, quickening, and raising up a life of the sun's virtues in it, would this be setting up an inward sun in opposition to the outward one? Could anything be more ridiculous than such a charge? For is not all that is here said of an inward sun in the vegetable, so much said of a power and virtue derived from the sun in the firmament? So in like manner all that is said of an inward Christ, inwardly formed, and generated in the root of the soul, is only so much said of an inward life, brought forth by the power and efficacy of that Blessed Christ that was born of the Virgin Mary. —[*The Spirit of Prayer*, p. 45.]

THE PROCESS OF CHRIST

I AM THE WAY

NOW, here is opened to us the true reason of the whole process of our Saviour's incarnation, passion, death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven: it was because fallen man was to go through all these stages as necessary parts of his return to God; and, therefore, if man was to go out of his fallen state, there must be a son of this fallen man, who as a head and fountain of the whole race, could do all this, could go back through all these gates, and so make it possible for all the individuals of human nature, as being born of him, to inherit his conquering nature, and follow him through all these passages to Eternal Life. And thus we see, in the strongest and clearest light, both why and how the Holy Jesus is become our great Redeemer.—[*An Appeal to all that Doubt*, p. 190.]

THEY ARE THEY WHICH TESTIFY OF ME

IF it be asked, then, What is the great discovery, new light and knowledge, declared in these texts, as newly made known to the world by the gospel? it is answered, That the one only thing meant both by the letter and spirit of all these, and every other the like passages of Scripture, speaking of that mystery, new light, discovery, or knowledge made known by the Gospel, and unknown before, is strictly and absolutely nothing else, means nothing else, points at nothing else, and has nothing else implied in it, but the one whole process of Christ, in His personality, His birth, His life, His sufferings, His death, His resurrection, and ascension into heaven. This, and this alone, namely, the whole process of Christ, in all these important particulars of it, is the

great salvation, the great mystery, the hidden wisdom of God, etc., kept secret from the foundation of the world, and not manifested, nor possible to be manifested, but by Christ Himself entering into and going through all the parts of this process. Of this process alone it is that the apostles speak, when they declare the mystery opened in the gospel to have been a mystery kept secret since the world began; and the reason why it was so is plain, because it must be a secret and continue such, till what was contained in it came into actual existence, and thereby manifested itself. For as light can only manifest itself by coming into existence, so the mystery implied in Christ's process could only manifest itself, and nothing but its full actual existence in all its parts could possibly be its manifestation.

Of this process alone and its wonderful effects it is that the apostles speak, when they glory of the abolishment of death, and of that life and immortality brought to light through the gospel. Because it is the gospel alone that manifests the actual existence of this process of Christ in all its parts, in and by which alone death has its abolishment and life its true resurrection. Nor do they ever speak of any light, life, or knowledge, as formerly the hidden wisdom of God, and now made manifest to the world, but solely that light, that life, and that knowledge which arises from, or is contained in, some one or other, or all the parts of our Saviour's process, as the one only possible and actual Redeemer of the world, in and by and through that process. That this is and must be the plain full truth of the matter, viz., That the one only thing, or mystery discovered to the world by the light of the gospel is solely the one whole process of Christ, must be acknowledged by every considerate man, even from the nature of the thing itself. For what can the mystery of the gospel be but the mystery of Christ as a Saviour made known to the world? And what can the mystery of Christ as a Saviour made known be but the manifestation of what He is in Himself, in the power of His

personality, in the efficacy of His birth in our flesh, in the blessed effects and consequences of His life, His sufferings, His death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven, as our Second Adam, or Father of a new heavenly birth of the Divine Nature, derived into us by His wonderful process in all its parts. . . .

HERE IS WISDOM

And here, my Lord, may be plainly seen why the wisdom of this world always was, and always must be, foolishness with God. It is because the wisdom of this world, be it of what kind it will, in whatever form or shape it appears, has nothing of the process of Christ in it, is not only without it, but contrary to it. Therefore let a man be doing what he will, however great, wise, and distinguishing it may seem to be, yet, since it has not its rise and growth in and from the one spirit of Christ's process, it is but mere foolishness with God, and has all the loss and misery in it to man that can be the effect of any folly. For since the one great want, or the one thing needful to man, is to come out of the evil, the blindness and misery of his fallen nature, and nothing either in heaven or on earth can possibly do this for him but the one spirit of Christ's whole process, nothing else can possibly be his wisdom. This state of things is unalterable; it equally takes in every man and every age of the world. The law, the prophets, the gospel, may be all embraced, honoured, and defended with zeal, in their respective times; but if the one spirit of Christ's whole process is not the one thing sought, the one thing found and kept alive by them, law, prophets, and gospel, however holy, spiritual, and good in themselves, will be made to set up a kingdom of that worldly wisdom which is foolishness with God. For all the dispensations of God have but one wisdom and one meaning, they mean nothing, seek nothing, but to bring forth a true and real resurrection of the life, spirit, and power of Christ in the fallen human nature.—[*A Short Confutation, etc.*, pp. 12, 94.]

THE ATONEMENT

BUT I must enlarge a little upon the nature and merits of our Saviour's last sufferings. It is plain from Scripture that that death which our Blessed Lord died on the cross was absolutely necessary for our salvation—that He as our Saviour was to taste death for every man—that as the Captain of our salvation He was to be made perfect through sufferings—that there was no entrance for fallen man into paradise till Christ had overcome death and hell, or that first and second death which stood between us and it. Now the absolute necessity of our Saviour's doing and suffering all this plainly appears, as soon as we consider Him as the Second Adam, Who, as such, is to undo all the evil that the first Adam had done in human nature, and therefore must enter into every state that belonged to this fallen nature, restoring in every state that which was lost, quickening that which was extinguished, and overcoming in every state that by which man was overcome. And, therefore, as eternal death was as certainly brought forth in our souls, as temporal death in our bodies, as this death was a state that belonged to fallen man, therefore our Lord was obliged to taste this dreadful death, to enter into the realities of it, that he might carry our nature victoriously through it. And as a fallen man was to have entered into this eternal death at his giving up the ghost in this world, so the Second Adam, as reversing all that the first had done, was to stand in this second death upon the cross, and die from it into paradise out of which Adam the first died into this world. Now when the time drew near that our Blessed Lord was to enter upon

HE DESCENDED INTO HELL

His last great sufferings, viz., the realities of that second death through which He was to pass, then it was that all the anguishing terrors of a lost soul began to open themselves in Him; then all that eternal death, which Adam had brought into his soul when it lost the Light and Spirit of Heaven, began to be awakened and stirring in the Second Adam, who was come to stand in the last state of the fallen soul, to be encompassed with that eternal death and sensibility of hell, which must have been the everlasting state of fallen man. The beginning of our Lord's entrance into the terrible jaws of this second death may be justly dated from those affecting words, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; tarry ye here with me and watch. See here the Lord of Life reduced to such distress as to beg the prayers, watching, and assistance of His poor disciples! A plain proof that it was not the sufferings of this world, but a state of dreadful dereliction that was coming upon Him. O Holy Redeemer, that I knew how to describe the anguishing terrors of Thy Soul, when Thou wast entering into eternal death, that no other son of man might fall into it!

The progress of these terrors is plainly shewn us in our Lord's agony in the garden, when the reality of this eternal death so broke in upon Him, so awakened and stirred itself in Him, as to force great drops of blood to sweat from His body. This was that bitter cup which made Him withdraw Himself, prostrate Himself, and thrice repeat an earnest prayer, that if it were possible it might pass from Him, but at the same time heartily prayed to drink it according to the Divine Will. This was that cup He was drinking from the sixth to the ninth hour on the cross, nailed to the terrors of a twofold death, when He cried out, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?'

We are not to suppose that our Lord's agony was the terrors of a person that was going to be murdered, or the fears of that death which men could inflict upon Him; for He had told His

disciples not to fear them that could kill the body, and therefore we may be sure He had no such fears Himself. No; His agony was His entrance into the last eternal terrors of the lost soul, into the real horrors of that dreadful eternal death, which man unredeemed must have died into when he left this world. We are therefore not to consider our Lord's death upon the cross as only the death of that mortal body which was nailed to it, but we are to look upon Him with wounded hearts, as fixed and fastened in the state of that twofold death which was due to the fallen nature out of which He could not come, till He could say, 'It is finished; Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit.' In that instant He gave up the ghost of this earthly life; and as a proof of His having overcome all the bars and chains of death and hell, He rent the rocks, opened the graves, and brought the dead to life, and triumphantly entered into that long-shut-up paradise, out of which Adam died, and in which He promised the thief he should that day be with Him.

When, therefore, thou beholdest the crucifix, which finely represents to thy senses the Saviour of the world hanging on the cross, let not thy thoughts stay on any sufferings or death that the malice of men can cause; for He hung there in greater distress than any human power can inflict, forsaken of God, feeling, bearing, and overcoming the pains and darkness of that eternal death which the fallen soul of Adam had brought into it. For as Adam, by his fall or death in paradise, had nothing left in his soul but the nature, properties, and life of hell, all which must have awakened in him in their full strength as soon as he had lost the flesh and blood and light of this world, as this eternal death was a state that belonged to man by the fall, so there was an absolute necessity that the Saviour of Man should enter into all these awakened realities of the last eternal death, and come victoriously out of them, or man had never been redeemed from them. For the fallen nature could no way possibly be saved,

but by its own coming victoriously out of every part of its fallen state; and therefore all this was to be done by that Son of Man, from Whom we had a power of deriving into us His victorious nature.

Lastly, if our blessed Lord was not ascended into heaven, and set on the Right Hand of God, He could not deliver us from our sins; and therefore the Scripture ascribes to Him, as ascended, a perpetual priesthood in heaven. 'If any man sin,' saith St. John, 'we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and He is the Propitiation for our sins.' All these things therefore are so many equally essential parts of our Saviour's character, as He is the One Atonement, the Full Satisfaction for sin, the Saviour and Deliverer from the bondage, power, and effects of sin. And to ascribe our deliverance from sin, or the remission of our sins, more to the Life and Actions than to the Death of Christ, or to His death more than to His resurrection and ascension, is directly contrary to the plain letter and tenor of the Scripture, which speaks of all these things as jointly qualifying our Lord to be the All-sufficient Redeemer of Mankind; and when speaking separately of any of them, ascribes the same power, efficacy, and redeeming virtue to one as to the other.—[*An Appeal to all that Doubt*, p. 192.]

THE DEEP THINGS OF GOD

AGAIN, when it is by the letter of Scripture revealed to us that the blessed Jesus is the One Mediator between God and men; that He is the Atonement, the Propitiation, and Satisfaction for our sins; these expressions only teach us as much outward knowledge of so great a mystery as human language can represent. But they do not teach us the real or perfect nature of Christ's state between God and sinners. For that, being a divine and supernatural matter, cannot by any outward words be revealed to us as it is in its own nature, any more than the Essence of God can be made visible to our eyes of flesh. But these expressions

teach us thus much with certainty—that there is in the state of Christ between God and sinners something infinitely and inconceivably beneficial to us, and truly answerable to all that we mean by mediation, atonement, propitiation, and satisfaction. And though the real, internal manner of this mediation and atonement, as it is in its own nature, is incomprehensible to the natural man, yet this does not lessen our knowledge of the truth and certainty of it, any more than the incomprehensibility of the Divine Nature lessens our certainty of its real existence. And as our idea of God, though consisting of incomprehensible perfections, helps us to a real and certain knowledge of the Divine nature, and, though all mysterious, is yet the solid foundation of all piety, so our idea of Jesus Christ, as our Mediator and Atonement, though it be mighty incomprehensible in itself as to its real nature, yet helps us to a certain and real knowledge of Christ as our Mediator and Atonement, and, though full of mystery, it is yet full of motives to the highest degrees of piety, devotion, love, and gratitude to God.—[*A Case of Reason, etc.*, p. 39.]

SINFULNESS OF SIN

NOW, how monstrous and shameful the nature of sin is, is sufficiently apparent from that great atonement that is necessary to cleanse us from the guilt of it. Nothing less has been required to take away the guilt of our sins than the sufferings and death of the Son of God. Had He not taken our nature upon Him, our nature had been for ever separated from God, and incapable of ever appearing before Him. And is there any room for pride, or self-glory, whilst we are partakers of such a nature as this? Have our sins rendered us so abominable and odious to Him that made us, that He could not so much as receive our prayers, or admit our repentance, till the Son of God made Himself Man, and became a Suffering Advocate for our whole race; and can we in this state pretend to high thoughts of ourselves?

Shall we presume to take delight in own worth, who are not worthy so much as to ask pardon for our sins without the mediation and intercession of the Son of God?—[*Serious Call*, p. 299.]

THE NEW BIRTH

NOW, is not all this strictly according to the very outward letter and inward truth of the most important articles of the Christian religion? For what else can be meant by the necessity of our being born again of the Word, or Son of God, being born of the Spirit of God, in order to our entrance into the kingdom of heaven? Is not this saying, that the Triune Life of God must first have its birth in us before we can enter into the Triune, Beatific Life or Presence of God? What else is taught us by that new birth sought for by a baptism, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? Does it not plainly tell us that the Triune Nature of the Deity is that which wants to be born in us, and that our redemption consists in nothing else but in the bringing forth this new birth in us, and that, being thus born again in the Likeness of the Holy Trinity, we may be capable of its threefold blessing and happiness? The New Testament tells us of the impossibility of our being redeemed but by the Son of God, of the impossibility of our being made holy but by the Holy Spirit of God: now, how could we want any distinct thing particularly from the Son of God, any distinct thing particularly from the Holy Ghost, in order to raise and repair our fallen nature; how could this particularity be thus absolutely necessary, but because the Holy Threefold Life of the Deity must stand within us, in the birth of our own life, as it does without us, that so we may be capable of living in God, and God in us? Search to eternity why no devil or beast can possibly be a partaker of the kingdom of heaven, and there can only this one reason be assigned for it,—because neither of them have the Triune

WE WILL COME UNTO HIM AND MAKE OUR ABODE WITH HIM

Holy Life of God in them. For every created thing does and must and can only want, seek, unite with, and enjoy that outwardly, which is of the same nature with itself. Remove a devil where you will, he is still in hell, and always at the same distance from heaven; he can touch, or taste, or reach nothing but what is in hell. Carry a beast where you please, either to court or to church, he is yet at the same infinite distance from the joys and fears either of church or court as the beasts that never saw any thing else but their own kind; and all this is grounded solely on this eternal truth, namely, that no being can rise higher than its own life reaches. The circle of the birth of life in every creature is its necessary circumference, and it cannot possibly reach any further; and therefore it is a joyful truth, that beings created to worship and adore the Holy Trinity, and to enter into the Beatific Life and Presence of the Triune God, must of all necessity have the same triune life in their own creaturely being. And now, what can be so glorious, so edifying, so ravishing, as this knowledge of God and ourselves? The very thought of our standing in this likeness and relation to the Infinite Creator and Being of all beings is enough to kindle the Divine Life within us, and melt us into a continual love and adoration. For how can we enough love and adore that Holy Trinity wnich has created us in its own likeness, that we might live in an eternal union and communion with it? Will any one call this an irreverent familiarity, or bold looking into the Holy Trinity, which is nothing else than a thankful adoration of it as our glorious Father and Creator? It is our best and only acknowledgment of the greatest truths of the Holy Scriptures; it is the Scripture doctrine of the Trinity kept in its own simplicity, separated from scholastic speculations, where the Three in God are only distinguished by that threefold share that they have in the creation and redemption of man. When we thus know the Trinity in ourselves, and adore its high original in the Deity, we are possessed of a truth of the greatest moment,

that enlightens the mind with the most solid and edifying knowledge, and opens to us the fullest understanding of all that concerns the creation, fall, and redemption of man. . . .

Salvation is a birth of life, but reason can no more bring forth this birth than it can kindle life in a plant or animal. You might as well write the word flame upon the outside of a flint, and then expect that its imprisoned fire should be kindled by it, as to imagine that any images or ideal speculations of reason painted in your brain should raise your soul out of its state of death and kindle the Divine life in it. No! Would you have fire from a flint its house of death must be shaken and its chains of darkness broken off by the strokes of a steel upon it. This must of all necessity be done to your soul; its imprisoned fire must be awakened by the sharp strokes of steel, or no true light of life can arise in it. All nature and creature tell you that the heavenly life must begin in you from the same causes and the same operation as every earthly life, whether vegetable or animal, does in this world.—[*An Appeal to all that Doubt, etc.*, p. 52.]

ALL THINGS BECOME NEW

THOU hast seen, dear reader, the nature and necessity of regeneration; be persuaded therefore fully to believe, and firmly to settle in thy mind this most certain truth, that all our salvation consists in the manifestation of the Nature, Life, and Spirit of Jesus Christ in our inward new man. This alone is Christian redemption, this alone delivers from the guilt and power of sin, this alone redeems, renews, and regains the first life of God in the soul of man. Everything besides this is self, is fiction, is propriety, is own will, and, however coloured, is only thy old man, with all his deeds. Enter therefore with all thy heart into this truth, let thy eye be always upon it, do everything in view of it, try everything by the truth of it, love nothing but for the sake of it. Wherever thou goest, whatever thou doest at home or abroad, in the field or at church, do all in a desire of union with Christ, in imitation of

His tempers and inclinations, and look upon all as nothing, but that which exercises and increases the Spirit and Life of Christ in thy soul. From morning to night keep Jesus in thy heart, long for nothing, desire nothing, hope for nothing, but to have all that is within thee changed into the spirit and temper of the Holy Jesus. Let this be thy Christianity, thy church, and thy religion. For this new birth in Christ, thus firmly believed and continually desired, will do everything that thou wantest to have done in thee; it will dry up all the springs of vice, stop all the workings of evil in thy nature, it will bring all that is good into thee, it will open all the gospel within thee, and thou wilt know what it is to be taught of God. This longing desire of thy heart to be one with Christ will soon put a stop to all the vanity of thy life, and nothing will be admitted to enter into thy heart, or proceed from it, but what comes from God and returns to God. Thou wilt soon be, as it were, tied and bound in the chains of all holy affections and desires, thy mouth will have a watch set upon it, thy ears would willingly hear nothing that does not tend to God, nor thy eyes be open but to see and find occasion of doing good. In a word, when this faith has got both thy head and thy heart, it will then be with thee as it was with the merchant who found a pearl of great price; it will make thee gladly to sell all that thou hast and buy it. For all that had seized and possessed the heart of any man, whatever the merchant of this world had got together, whether of riches, power, honour, learning, or reputation, loses all its value, is counted but as dung, and willingly parted with, as soon as this glorious pearl, the new birth in Christ Jesus, is discovered and found by him. This, therefore, may serve as a touchstone, whereby every one may try the truth of his state: if the old man is still a merchant within thee, trading in all sorts of worldly honour, power, or learning; if the wisdom of this world is not foolishness to thee; if earthly interests and sensual pleasures are still the desire of thy heart, and only covered under a form of

godliness, a cloak of creeds, observances, and institutions of religion, thou mayest be assured that the pearl of great price is not yet found by thee. For where Christ is born, or His Spirit rises up in the soul, there all self is denied and obliged to turn out; there all carnal wisdom, arts of advancement, with every pride and glory of this life, are so many heathen idols all willingly renounced, and the man is not only content, but rejoices to say that his kingdom is not of this world.

But thou wilt perhaps say, How shall this great work, the birth of Christ, be effected in me? it might rather be said, Since Christ has an infinite power, and also an infinite desire to save mankind, how can any one miss of this salvation but through his own unwillingness to be saved by Him? Consider: How was it that the lame and blind, the lunatic and leper, the publican and sinner, found Christ to be their Saviour, and to do all that for them which they wanted to be done to them? It was because they had a real desire of having that which they asked for, and therefore in true faith and prayer applied to Christ, that His Spirit and Power might enter into them, and heal that which they wanted and desired to be healed in them. Every one of these said in faith and desire, Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me whole. And the answer was always this, According to thy faith, so be it done unto thee. This is Christ's answer now, and thus it is done to every one of us at this day; as our faith is, so is it done unto us. And here lies the whole reason of our falling short of the salvation of Christ; it is because we have no will to it.—[*The Spirit of Prayer*, p. 49.]

CONVERSION

VARIETY IN

IT may freely be granted that conversion to God is often very sudden and instantaneous, unexpectedly raised from variety of occasions. Thus, one by seeing only a withered tree, another by reading the lives and deaths of the antediluvian fathers, one by hearing of heaven, another of hell, one by reading of the love or wrath of God, another of the sufferings of Christ, may find himself, as it were, melted into penitence all on a sudden. It may be granted also, that the greatest sinner may in a moment be converted to God, and feel himself wounded in such a degree as perhaps those never were who have been turning to God all their lives. But then it is to be observed: That this suddenness of change or flash of conviction is by no means of the essence of true conversion, and is no more to be demanded in ourselves or others, than such a light from heaven as shone round St. Paul and cast him to the ground. *Secondly*, that no one is to expect or require that another should receive his conversion or awakening from the same cause or in the same manner as he has done, that is, that heaven or hell, or the justice or love of God, or faith in Christ, either as our Light or our Atonement, must needs be the first awakening of the soul, because it has been so with him. *Thirdly*, that this stroke of conversion is not to be considered as signifying our high state of a new birth in Christ, or a proof that we are on a sudden made new creatures, but that we are thus suddenly called and stirred up to look after a newness of nature. *Fourthly*, that this sensibility, or manifest feeling of the operations of God upon our souls, which we have experienced in these first awaken-

ings, is not to be expected or desired to go along with us through the course of our purification. *Fifthly*, that regeneration, or the renewal of our first birth and state, is something entirely distinct from this first sudden conversion or call to repentance; that it is not a thing done in an instant, but it is a certain process, a gradual release from our captivity and disorder, consisting of several stages and degrees, both of death and life, which the soul must go through before it can have thoroughly put off the old man. I will not say that this must needs be in the same degree in all, or that there cannot be any exception to this. But thus much is true and certain, that Jesus Christ is our Pattern, that what He did for us that we are also to do for ourselves, or, in other words, we must follow Him in the regeneration. For what He did, He did both as our Atonement and Example; His process or course of life, temptations, sufferings, denying His Own will, death, and resurrection [were] all done and gone through on our account, because the human soul wanted such a process of regeneration and redemption; because only in such a gradual process all that was lost in Adam could be restored to us again. And therefore it is beyond all doubt that this process is to be looked upon as the stated method of our purification. It is well worth observing, that our Saviour's greatest trials were near the end of His process or life,—that He then experienced the sharpest part of our redemption. This might sufficiently show us that our first awakenings have carried us but a little way: that we should not then begin to be self-assured of our own salvation, but remember that we stand at a great distance from, and in great ignorance of, our severest trials.—[*Christian Regeneration*, p. 95.]

FAITH

THE FAITH THAT SAVES

REPENTANCE is but a kind of table-talk till we see so much of the deformity of our inward nature as to be in some degree frighted and terrified at the sight of it. There must be some kind of an earthquake within us, something that must rend and shake us to the bottom, before we can be enough sensible, either of the state of death we are in, or enough desirous of that Saviour who alone can raise us from it. A plausible form of an outward life, that has only learned rules and modes of religion by use and custom, often keeps the soul for some time at ease, though all its inward root and ground of sin has never been shaken or molested, though it has never tasted of the bitter waters of repentance, and has only known the want of a Saviour by hearsay. But things cannot pass thus: sooner or later repentance must have a broken and a contrite heart. We must with our Blessed Lord go over the brook Cedron, and with Him sweat great drops of sorrow, before He can say for us, as He said for Himself, It is finished.

Now, though this sensibility of the sinfulness of our inward ground is not to be expected to be the same in all, yet the truth and reality of it must, and will be, in all that do but give way to the discovery of it; and our sinfulness would ever be in our sight if we did not industriously turn our eyes from it. If we used but half the pains to find out the evil that is hidden in us as we do to hide the appearance of it from others, we should soon find that in the midst of our most orderly life we are in death, and want a Saviour to make our most apparent virtues to be virtuous. . . .

The reason why we know so little of Jesus Christ as our Saviour, Atonement, and Justification, why we are so destitute of that faith in Him which alone can change, rectify, and redeem our souls, why we live starving in the coldness and deadness of a formal, historical, hearsay religion, is this: we are strangers to our own inward misery and wants; we know not that we lie in the jaws of death and hell; we keep all things quiet within us, partly by outward forms and modes of religion and morality, and partly by the comforts, cares and delights of this world. Hence it is that we consent to receive a Saviour as we consent to admit of the four Gospels, because only four are received by the church. We believe in a Saviour, not because we feel an absolute want of one, but because we have been told there is one, and that it would be a rebellion against God to reject Him. We believe in Christ as our Atonement, just as we believe that He cast seven devils out of Mary Magdalene, and so are no more helped, delivered, and justified by believing that He is our Atonement than by believing that He cured Mary Magdalene. True faith is a coming to Jesus Christ to be saved and delivered from a sinful nature, as the Canaanitish woman came to Him and would not be denied. It is a faith of love, a faith of hunger, a faith of thirst, a faith of certainty and firm assurance, that in love and longing and hunger and thirst and full assurance will lay hold on Christ as its loving, assured, certain, and infallible Saviour and Atonement. It is this faith that breaks off all the bars and chains of death and hell in the soul. It is to this faith that Christ always says, what he said in the gospel, Thy faith hath saved thee; thy sins are forgiven thee; go in peace. Nothing can be denied to this faith; all things are possible to it; and he that thus seeks Christ must find Him to be his Salvation. On the other hand, all things will be dull and heavy, difficult and impossible to us, we shall toil all the night and take nothing, we shall be tired with resisting temptations, grow old and stiff in our sins and infirmities, if we do not with a strong, full, loving, and joyful assurance, seek

and come to Christ for every kind and degree of strength, salvation, and redemption. We must come unto Christ, as the blind, the sick, and the leprous came to Him, expecting all from Him, and nothing from themselves. When we have this faith, then it is that Christ can do all His mighty works in us.—[*Christian Regeneration,* pp. 38, 40.]

LOVE

A HYMN TO LOVE

ALL religion is the spirit of love; all its gifts and graces are the gifts and graces of love; it has no breath, no life, but the life of love. Nothing exalts, nothing purifies, but the fire of love; nothing changes death into life, earth into heaven, men into angels, but love alone. Love breathes the Spirit of God; its words and works are the inspiration of God. It speaketh not of itself, but the Word, the eternal Word of God, speaketh in it; for all that love speaketh, that God speaketh, because Love is God. Love is heaven revealed in the soul; it is light and truth; it is infallible; it has no errors, for all errors are the want of love. Love has no more of pride than light has of darkness; it stands and bears all its fruits from a depth and root of humility. Love is of no sect or party; it neither makes nor admits of any bounds; you may as easily enclose the light, or shut up the air of the world into one place, as confine love to a sect or party. It lives in the liberty, the universality, the impartiality of heaven. It believes in one holy, catholic God, the God of all spirits; it unites and joins with the catholic spirit of the One God, Who unites with all that is good, and is meek, patient, well-wishing, and long-suffering, over all the evil that is in nature and creature. Love, like the Spirit of God, rideth upon the wings of the wind; and is in union and communion with all the saints that are in heaven and on earth. Love is quite pure; it has no by-ends; it seeks not its own; it has but one will, and that is to give itself into every thing, and overcome all evil with good. Lastly, Love is the Christ

of God; it comes down from heaven; it regenerates the soul from above; it blots out all transgressions; it takes from death its sting, from the devil his power, and from the serpent his poison. It heals all the infirmities of our earthly birth; it gives eyes to the blind, ears to the deaf, and makes the dumb to speak; it cleanses the lepers, and casts out devils, and puts man in paradise before he dies. It lives wholly to the will of Him of Whom it is born; its meat and drink is to do the will of God. It is the resurrection and life of every Divine virtue, a fruitful mother of true humility, boundless benevolence, unwearied patience, and bowels of compassion.—[*The Spirit of Prayer*, Part II. p. 128.]

THE WILL THE DEED

OUR power of doing external acts of love and goodness is often very narrow and restrained. There are, it may be, but few people to whom we can contribute any worldly relief. But though our outward means of doing good are often thus limited, yet if our hearts are but full of love and goodness, we get, as it were, an infinite power; because God will attribute to us those good works, those acts of love and tender charities which we sincerely desired, and would gladly have performed, had it been in our power. You cannot heal all the sick, relieve all the poor; you cannot comfort all in distress, nor be a father to all the fatherless. You cannot, it may be, deliver many from their misfortunes, or teach them to find comfort in God. But if there is a love and tenderness in your heart that delights in these good works and excites you to do all that you can; if your love has no bounds, but continually wishes and prays for the relief and happiness of all that are in distress, you will be received by God as a benefactor to those who have had nothing from you but your goodwill and tender affections. You cannot build hospitals for the incurable; you cannot erect monasteries for the education of persons in holy solitude, continual prayer, and mortification; but if you join in your heart with those that do, and thank God for their pious designs; if you are a friend

to these great friends to mankind, and rejoice in their eminent virtues, you will be received by God as a sharer of such good works as, though they had none of your hands, yet had all your heart. This consideration surely is sufficient to make us look to and watch over our hearts, with all diligence to study the improvement of our inward tempers, and aspire after every height and perfection of a loving, charitable, and benevolent mind. . . .

Now, there is nothing that so much exalts our souls as this heavenly love; it cleanses and purifies like a holy fire, and all ill tempers fall away before it. It makes room for all virtues, and carries them to their greatest height. Everything that is good and holy grows out of it, and it becomes a continual source of all holy desires and pious practices. By love I do not mean any natural tenderness, which is more or less in people according to their constitutions; but I mean a larger principle of the soul, founded in reason and piety, which makes us tender, kind, and benevolent to all our fellow-creatures, as creatures of God, and for His sake. It is this love that loves all things in God, as His creatures, as the images of His power, as the creatures of His goodness, as parts of His family, as members of His society, that becomes a holy principle of all great and good actions.—[*Serious Call*, p. 397.]

LOVE ITS OWN END

OH, sir! would you know the blessing of all blessings, it is this God of Love dwelling in your soul, and killing every root of bitterness which is the pain and torment of every earthly selfish love. For all wants are satisfied, all disorders of nature are removed, no life is any longer a burden, every day is a day of peace, everything you meet becomes a help to you, because everything you see or do is all done in the sweet, gentle element of love. For as love has no by-ends, wills nothing but its own increase, so everything is as oil to its flame; it must have that which it wills, and cannot be disappointed, because everything naturally helps it to live in its own way and to bring forth its

own work. The Spirit of Love does not want to be rewarded, honoured, or esteemed; its only desire is to propagate itself, and become the blessing and happiness of everything that wants it. And, therefore, it meets wrath, and evil, and hatred, and opposition, with the same one will, as the light meets the darkness, only to overcome it with all its blessings. Did you want to avoid the wrath and ill-will, or to gain the favour of any persons, you might easily miss of your ends; but if you have no will but to all goodness, everything you meet, be it what it will, must be forced to be assistant to you. For the wrath of an enemy, the treachery of a friend, and every other evil, only helps the Spirit of Love to be more triumphant, to live its own life, and find all its own blessings in an higher degree. Whether, therefore, you consider perfection or happiness, it is all included in the Spirit of Love, and must be so, for this reason:—because the infinitely perfect and happy God is mere Love, an unchanged Will to all Goodness; and therefore every creature must be corrupt and unhappy, so far as it is led by any other will than the one Will to all Goodness. Thus you see the ground, the nature, and perfection of the Spirit of Love. Let me now, in a word or two, shew you the necessity of it. The necessity is absolute and unchangeable. No creature can be a child of God but because the goodness of God is in it; nor can it have any union or communion with the goodness of the Deity till its life is a spirit of love. This is the one only band of union betwixt God and the creature. All besides this, or that is not this, call it by what name you will, is only so much error, fiction, impurity, and corruption, got into the creature, and must of all necessity be entirely separated from it, before it can have that purity and holiness which alone can see God or find the Divine Life. For as God is an Immutable Will to all Goodness, so the Divine Will can unite or work with no creaturely will but that which wills with Him only that which is good. Here the necessity is absolute: nothing will do instead

of this Will; all contrivances of holiness, all forms of religious piety, signify nothing, without this will to all goodness. For as the Will to all Goodness is the whole nature of God, so it must be the whole nature of every service or religion that can be acceptable to Him. For nothing serves God, or worships and adores Him, but that which wills and works with Him. For God can delight in nothing but His Own Will and His Own Spirit, because all goodness is included in it, and can be nowhere else. And, therefore, everything that follows an own will, or an own spirit, forsakes the one Will to all Goodness, and whilst it does so, has no capacity for the Light and Spirit of God. The necessity, therefore, of the Spirit of Love is what God Himself cannot dispense with in the creature, no more than He can deny Himself, or act contrary to His Own Holy Being. But as it was His Will to all Goodness that brought forth angels and the spirits of men, so He can will nothing in their existence but that they should live and work and manifest that same Spirit of Love and goodness which brought them into being. Everything, therefore, but the will and life of goodness is an apostasy in the creature, and is rebellion against the whole Nature of God. There is no peace, nor ever can be, for the soul of man, but in the purity and perfection of its first created nature; nor can it have its purity and perfection in any other way than in and by the Spirit of Love. For as Love is the God that created all things, so Love is the Purity, the Perfection, and Blessing of all created things; and nothing can live in God but as it lives in Love. Look at every vice, pain, and disorder in human nature, it is in itself nothing else but the spirit of the creature turned from the universality of Love to some self-seeking or own will in created things. So that love alone is, and only can be, the cure of every evil; and he that lives in the purity of love is risen out of the power of evil into the freedom of the one Spirit of Heaven.—[*The Spirit of Love*, p. 7.]

ANOTHER HYMN TO LOVE

EUSEBIUS.—Pray, therefore, proceed as you please. For we have nothing so much at heart as to have the truth and purity of this Divine Love brought forth in us. For as it is the highest perfection that I adore in God, so I can neither wish nor desire anything for myself but to be totally governed by it. I could as willingly consent to lose all my being, as to find the power of love lost in my soul. Neither doctrine, nor mystery, nor precept has any delight for me, but as it calls forth the birth and growth and exercise of that Spirit, which does all that it does towards God and man, under the one law of love. Whatever, therefore, you can say to me, either to increase the power, manifest the defects, or remove the impediments of Divine Love in my soul, will be heartily welcome to me.

THEOPHILUS.—I apprehend that you do not yet know what Divine Love is in itself, nor what is its nature and power in the soul of man. For Divine Love is perfect Peace and Joy, it is a freedom from all disquiet, it is all content and mere happiness, and makes everything to rejoice in itself. Love is the Christ of God; wherever it comes, it comes as the blessing and happiness of every natural life, as the Restorer of every lost perfection, a Redeemer from all evil, a Fulfiller of all righteousness, and a Peace of God which passeth all understanding. Through all the universe of things, nothing is uneasy, unsatisfied, or restless, but because it is not governed by love, or because its nature has not reached or attained the full birth of the Spirit of Love. For when that is done, every hunger is satisfied, and all complaining, murmuring, accusing, resenting, revenging, and striving, are as totally suppressed and overcome as the coldness, thickness, and horror of darkness are suppressed and overcome by the breaking forth of the light. If you ask why the Spirit of Love cannot be displeased, cannot be disappointed, cannot complain, accuse, resent, or murmur, it is because Divine Love desires nothing but itself; it is its own good, it has all when it has itself

because nothing is good but itself and its own working; for Love is God, and he that dwelleth in God dwelleth in Love. Tell me now, Eusebius, are you thus blessed in the Spirit of Love?

Eusebius.—Would you have me tell you that I am an angel and without the infirmities of human flesh and blood?

Theophilus.—No: but I would have you judge of your state of love by these angelical tempers, and not by any fervour or heat that you find in yourself. For just so much, and so far, as you are freed from the folly of all earthly affections, from all disquiet, trouble, and complaint about this or that, just so much and so far is the Spirit of Love come to life in you. For Divine Love is a new life and new nature, and introduces you into a new world; it puts an end to all your former opinions, notions, and tempers, it opens new senses in you, and makes you see high to be low, and low to be high, wisdom to be foolishness, and foolishness wisdom; it makes prosperity and adversity, praise and dispraise, to be equally nothing. When I was a child, says the apostle, I thought as a child, I spoke as a child, but when I became a man, I put away childish things. Whilst man is under the power of nature, governed only by worldly wisdom, his life, however old he may be, is quite childish; everything about him only awakens childish thoughts and pursuits in him; all that he sees and hears, all that he desires or fears, likes or dislikes, that which he gets, and that which he loses, that which he has, and that which he has not, serve only to carry him from this fiction of evil to that fiction of good, from one vanity of peace to another vanity of trouble. But when Divine Love is born in the soul, all childish images of good and evil are done away, and all the sensibility of them is lost, as the stars lose their visibility when the sun is risen.

Theogenes.—That this is the true power of the Spirit of Divine Love I am fully convinced from my own uneasiness at finding that my natural tempers are not overcome by it. For whence

could I have this trouble, but because that little dawning that I have of the Spirit of Love in me, makes just demands to be the one Light, Breath, and Power of my life, and to have all that is within me overcome and governed by it. And, therefore, I find I must either silence this small voice of new risen love within me, or have no rest from complaints and self-condemnation till my whole nature is brought into subjection to it.

Theophilus.—Most rightly judged, Theogenes. And now we are fairly brought to the one great practical point on which all our proficiency in the Spirit of Love entirely depends: namely, that all that we are and all that we have from Adam, as fallen, must be given up, absolutely denied and resisted, if the birth of Divine Love is to be brought forth in us. For all that we are by nature is in full contrariety to this Divine Love, nor can it be otherwise; a death to itself is its only cure, and nothing else can make it subservient to good; just as darkness cannot be altered, or made better in itself, or transmuted into light,—it can only be subservient to the light by being lost in it, and swallowed up by it.—[*The Spirit of Love*, Part II. p. 176.]

HUMILITY

HUMILITY does not consist in having a worse opinion of ourselves than we deserve, or in abasing ourselves lower than we really are. But as all virtue is founded in truth, so humility is founded in a true and just sense of our weakness, misery, and sin. He that rightly feels and lives in this sense of his condition, lives in humility. . . . Let any man but look back upon his own life and see what use he has made of his reason, how little he has consulted it, and how less he has followed it. What foolish passions, what vain thoughts, what needless labours, what extravagant projects have taken up the greatest part of his life. How foolish he has been in his words and conversation; how seldom he has done well with judgment, and how often he has been kept from doing ill by accident; how seldom he has been able to please himself, and how often he has displeased others; how often he has changed his counsels, hated what he loved, and loved what he hated; how often he has been enraged and transported at trifles, pleased and displeased with the very same things, and constantly changing from one vanity to another. Let a man but take this view of his own life, and he will see reason enough to confess that pride was not made for man. Let him but consider that, if the world knew all that of him which he knows of himself, if they saw what vanity and passions govern his inside, and what secret tempers sully and corrupt his best actions, he would have no more pretence to be honoured and admired for his goodness and wisdom than a rotten and distempered body to be loved and admired for its beauty and

MADE FOR MAN

comeliness. This is so true, and so known to the hearts of almost all people, that nothing would appear more dreadful to them than to have their hearts thus fully discovered to the eyes of all beholders. And perhaps there are very few people in the world who would not rather choose to die than to have all their secret follies, the errors of their judgments, the vanity of their minds, the falseness of their pretences, the frequency of their vain and disorderly passions, their uneasiness, hatred, envies, and vexations made known unto the world. And shall pride be entertained in a heart thus conscious of its own miserable behaviour? Shall a creature in such a condition that he could not support himself under the shame of being known to the world in his real state, shall such a creature, because his shame is only known to God, to holy angels, and his own conscience, shall he in the sight of God and holy angels dare to be vain and proud of himself?—[*Serious Call*, pp. 295, 297.]

HEAVEN CLOTHES US WITH

AND here it is to be observed that every son of Adam is in the service of pride and self, be he doing what he will, till an humility that comes solely from heaven has been his redeemer. Till then all that he doth will be only done by the right hand, that the left hand may know it. And he that thinks it possible for the natural man to get a better humility than this from his own right reason (as it is often miscalled) refined by education, shows himself quite ignorant of this one most plain and capital truth of the gospel, namely, that there never was, nor ever will be, but one humility in the whole world, and that is the one humility of Christ, which never any man, since the fall of Adam, had the least degree of but from Christ. Humility is one, in the same sense and truth as Christ is one, the Mediator is one, Redemption is one. There are not two Lambs of God that take away the sins of the world. But if there was any humility besides that of Christ, there would be something else besides Him

that could take away the sins of the world. 'All that come before me,' says Christ, 'were thieves and robbers.' We are used to confine this to persons; but the same is as true of every virtue, whether it has the name of humility, charity, piety, or anything else; if it comes before Christ, however good it may pretend to be, it is but a cheat, a thief, and a robber, under the name of a godly virtue. And the reason is, because pride and self have the all of man till man has his all from Christ. He therefore only fights the good fight, whose strife is that the self-idolatrous nature which he hath from Adam may be brought to death by the supernatural humility of Christ brought to life in him. The enemies to man's rising out of the fall of Adam, through the Spirit and Power of Christ, are many. But the one great dragon-enemy, called antichrist, is SELF-EXALTATION. This is his birth, his pomp, his power, and his throne; when self-exaltation ceases, the last enemy is destroyed, and all that came from the pride and death of Adam is swallowed up in victory.—[*Address to the Clergy*, p. 106.]

MEEKNESS

THE MIND OF CHRIST

HERE also you see in a self-evident light the deep ground and absolute necessity of that one redemption which is called, and is, the meekness and heavenly blood of the Lamb of God. For these words in their true ground mean only the changing of the three first dark, wrathful properties of fallen nature into the three last properties of the heavenly life, light, and love, which is the Life of God restored to the soul, or the Light, and Spirit, or Word, of God born again in it. Let me only add this one word: turn from wrath of every kind, as you would flee from the most horrid devil; for it is his, it is he, and his strength in you. Whether you look at rage and anger in a tempest, a beast, or a man, it is but one and the same thing, from one and the same cause; and, therefore, your own wrath is to be turned from, as the same with that of hell, and which has its birth and strength from that hell or centre of nature, which the fall of angels hath made known, and which only worketh thus differently, whether it be a man, a beast, or the elements of this world. And this must be, till the centre of nature is again in its place of hiddenness, by being wholly overcome by heaven. Embrace, therefore, every meekness of love and humility with the same eagerness as you would fall down at the feet of Jesus Christ, for it is His, it is He, and His Power of Salvation in you. Enter into no strife or self-defence against any one that either reproaches you or your doctrine, but remember that, if you are to join with Christ in doing good, your sword of natural wrath must be locked up in its own sheath; no weapons of flesh are to be used, but you

must work only in the meekness, the sweetness, the humility, the love and patience of the Lamb of God, Who, as such, is the only Doer of good, the only Overcomer of wrath, and the One Redemption of fallen nature. If you are reproached as an enthusiast, do not take comfort in thinking that it is the truth of your own piety or the want of it in others that gives occasion to the charge; for though both of these should happen to be the case, yet they are not proper reflections for you; and if you take your peace from them, it is not the Peace of God in you. But as in good report you are to be as though you heard it not,—ascribe nothing to yourself from it; so in evil report self is just as much to be forgotten; and both of them are to be used only as an occasion to generate humility, meekness, love, and the spirit of the Lamb of God, both in yourself and all that speak either well or ill of you. For this is the will and working of heaven; it has but one will and one work, and that is, to change all the wrath, evil, and disorder of nature into a kingdom of God. And, therefore, he that would be a servant of God and work with heaven must will all that he willeth, do all that he doth, and bear all that he beareth, in that one spirit and one will with which heaven ruleth over all the earth. . . .

Academicus.—Oh Theophilus! you have given me more than I know how to contain, and yet have increased my thirst after more still. You have so touched the cord of love within me that all my nature stands in a trembling desire after it; I would fain feel nothing else but the gentle godlike power of love living in my heart.—[*The Way to Divine Knowledge*, pp. 229, 232.]

THANKFULNESS

TRUE PIETY OF

I HAVE been the longer upon this head because of its great importance to true religion. For there is no state of mind so holy, so excellent, and so truly perfect as that of thankfulness to God, and consequently nothing is of more importance in religion than that which exercises and improves this habit of mind. A dull, uneasy, complaining spirit, which is sometimes the spirit of those that seem careful of religion, is yet of all tempers the most contrary to religion, for it disowns that God which it pretends to adore. For he sufficiently disowns God who does not adore Him as a Being of Infinite Goodness. If a man does not believe that all the world is as God's family, where nothing happens by chance, but all is guided and directed by the care and providence of a Being that is all love and goodness to all His creatures, if a man do not believe this from his heart, he cannot be said truly to believe in God. And yet, he that has this faith, has faith enough to overcome the world, and always be thankful to God. For he that believes that everything happens to him for the best, cannot possibly complain for the want of something that is better. If, therefore, you live in murmurings and complaints, accusing all the accidents of life, it is not because you are a weak, infirm creature, but it is because you want the first principle of religion, a right belief in God. For as thankfulness is an express acknowledgment of the goodness of God towards you, so repinings and complaints are as plain accusations of God's want of goodness towards you. On the other hand, would you know who is the greatest saint in the world? It is not he who prays most or fasts most; it is not he

who gives most alms, or is most eminent for temperance, chastity, or justice; but it is he who is always thankful to God, who wills everything that God willeth, who receives everything as an instance of God's goodness, and has a heart always ready to praise God for it. All prayer and devotion, fastings and repentance, meditation and retirement, all sacraments and ordinances, are but so many means to render the soul thus divine and conformable to the will of God, and to fill it with thankfulness and praise for everything that comes from God. This is the perfection of all virtues; and all virtues that do not tend to it, or proceed from it, are but so many false ornaments of a soul not converted unto God. You need not, therefore, now wonder that I lay so much stress upon singing a psalm at all your devotions, since you see it is to form your spirit to such joy and thankfulness to God as is the highest perfection of a divine and holy life. If any one would tell you the shortest, surest way to all happiness and all perfection, he must tell you to make a rule to yourself, to thank and praise God for everything that happens to you. For it is certain that, whatever seeming calamity happens to you, if you thank and praise God for it, you turn it into a blessing. Could you, therefore, work miracles, you could not do more for yourself than by this thankful spirit; for it heals with a word speaking, and turns all that it touches into happiness. If, therefore, you would be so true to your eternal interest as to propose this thankfulness as the end of all your religion; if you would but settle it in your mind that this was the state that you was to aim at by all your devotions, you would then have something plain and visible to walk by in all your actions; you would then easily see the effect of your virtues, and might safely judge of your improvement in piety. For so far as you renounce all selfish tempers and motions of your own will, and seek for no other happiness but in the thankful reception of everything that happens to you, so far you may be safely reckoned to have advanced in piety. And although this be the highest

temper that you can aim at, though it be the noblest sacrifice that the greatest saint can offer unto God, yet is it not tied to any time, or place, or great occasion, but is always in your power, and may be the exercise of every day. For the common events of every day are sufficient to discover and exercise this temper, and may plainly show you how far you are governed in all your actions by this thankful spirit.—[*Serious Call*, p. 277.]

INTENTION

IT seems but a small part of piety . . . to have a sincere intention. . . . And yet it is purely for want of this degree of piety that you see such a mixture of sin and folly in the lives even of the better sort of people. It is for want of a sincere intention that you see men that profess religion, yet live in swearing and sensuality; that you see clergymen given to pride and covetousness and worldly enjoyments. It is for want of this intention that you see women that profess devotion yet living in all the folly and vanity of dress, wasting their time in idleness and pleasures and in all such instances of state and equipage as their estates will reach. For let but a woman feel her heart full of this intention, and she will find it as impossible to patch or paint as to curse or swear; she will no more desire to shine at balls and assemblies, or make a figure amongst those that are most finely dressed, than she will desire to dance upon a rope to please spectators. She will know that the one is as far from the wisdom and excellency of the Christian spirit as the other. It was this general intention that made the primitive Christians such eminent instances of piety, and made the goodly fellowship of the saints and all the glorious army of martyrs and confessors. And if you will here stop and ask yourself why you are not as pious as the primitive Christians were, your own heart will tell you that it is neither through ignorance nor inability, but purely because you never thoroughly intended it. You observe the same Sunday worship that they did, and you are strict in it because it is your full intention to be so. And when you as fully intend to be like them in their ordinary common life,

SUCH WE ARE

when you intend to please God in all your actions, you will find it as possible as to be strictly exact in the service of the church. And when you have this intention to please God in all your actions, as the happiest and best thing in the world, you will find in you as great an aversion to everything that is vain and impertinent in common life, whether of business or pleasure, as you now have to anything that is profane. You will be as fearful of living in any foolish way, either of spending your time or your fortune, as you are now fearful of neglecting the public worship. Now, who that wants this general sincere intention can be reckoned a Christian? And yet, if it was amongst Christians it would change the whole face of the world. True piety and exemplary holiness would be as common and visible as buying and selling or any trade in life. Let a clergyman but be thus pious, and he will converse as if he had been brought up by an apostle. He will no more think and talk of noble preferment than of noble eating, or a glorious chariot. He will no more complain of the frowns of the world, or a small cure, or the want of a patron, than he will complain of the want of a laced coat or a running horse. Let him but intend to please God in all his actions, as the happiest and best thing in the world, and then he will know that there is nothing noble in a clergyman but a burning zeal for the salvation of souls; nor anything poor in his profession but idleness and a worldly spirit. Again, let a tradesman but have this intention, and it will make him a saint in his shop. His every-day business will be a course of wise and reasonable actions made holy to God by being done in obedience to His will and pleasure. He will buy and sell and labour and travel, because by so doing he can do some good to himself and others. But then, as nothing can please God but what is wise and reasonable and holy, so he will neither buy nor sell nor labour in any other manner nor to any other end but such as may be shewn to be wise and reasonable and holy. He will, therefore, consider not what arts or methods or application will soonest make him

richer and greater than his brethren, or remove him from a shop to a life of state and pleasure, but he will consider what arts, what methods, what application can make worldly business most acceptable to God, and make a life of trade a life of holiness, devotion, and piety. This will be the temper and spirit of every tradesman; he cannot stop short of these degrees of piety, whenever it is his intention to please God in all his actions, as the best and happiest thing in the world. . . . This doctrine does not suppose that we have no need of Divine Grace, or that it is in our own power to make ourselves perfect. It only supposes that through the want of a sincere intention of pleasing God in all our actions we fall into such irregularities of life as by the ordinary means of grace we should have power to avoid; and that we have not that perfection which our present state of grace makes us capable of, because we do not so much as intend to have it. It only teaches us that the reason why you see no real mortification or self-denial, no eminent charity, no profound humility, no heavenly affection, no true contempt of the world, no Christian meekness, no sincere zeal, no eminent piety in the common lives of Christians, is this, because they do not so much as intend to be exact and exemplary in these virtues.—[*Serious Call*, pp. 17, 27.]

COMPLEXION

FOR MINE MISLIKE ME NOT

NOW, though the natural life in all men is one and the same, yet there is under it a variety of complexions, which makes men of the same nature almost infinitely different from one another. Now the matter is just thus with the spiritual man, or in the inward world. As many different complexions arise in the soul enlightened by the Son of God as in the soul enlightened by the outward light of this world. For the outward world is but a glass or representation of the inward; and every thing and variety of things in temporal nature must have its root or hidden cause in something that is more inward. It is therefore a well-grounded and undeniable truth that the new spiritual man hath his particular complexion, as sure as the outward and natural man hath. Hence it is that there has been so great a difference in the form and character of the most eminent and faithful servants of God. One could think of nothing but penitence and penitential austerities; another, all inflamed with the love of God, could think or speak of nothing else; some have been driven into a holy solitude, living as John the Baptist, others have been wholly taken up in works of charity, loving their neighbour even more than themselves. A great variety of this kind has been always found amongst those who were most truly devoted to God, which variety is not only not hurtful in itself, nor displeasing to God, but is as much according to His Will and the designs of His Wisdom as the difference between cherubims and seraphims, or the variety of the stars in the firmament. Every complexion of the inward man,

when sanctified by humility and suffering itself to be tuned and struck and moved by the Holy Spirit of God according to its particular frame and turn, helps mightily to increase that harmony of divine praise, thanksgiving, and adoration, which must arise from different instruments, sounds, and voices. To condemn this variety in the servants of God, or to be angry at those who have not served Him in the way that we have chosen for ourselves, is but too plain a sign that we have not enough renounced the elements of selfishness, pride, and anger. From this variety of complexions, both in the inward and outward man, we may make some useful observations. And the first may be this, that every man whose complexion is strong in him, as to one particular kind, is vehemently inclined to imprint the same upon others, and that others of the same kind are naturally disposed to catch and receive it from him. But I shall consider this matter only with regard to religion. Let it be supposed that men of a certain complexion have taken upon them to try the religious state of others by these questions: —Are you sure that you should be able to die a martyr? Do you find certain strong resolutions, not in your head or your brain, but in your inward man, that you would not refuse a martyrdom of any kind? Have you the witness of the Spirit within you, bearing witness with your spirit that you are in this state? Now it is beyond all question that an examination of this kind, or a demand of such faith, can have no better foundation than complexion. Who do you think would be most likely to come into this faith? It would be those who are most unlikely to keep it. It would be those who knew the least of themselves and whose piety had more of heat than of light in it. It would be those whose outward man was of the same complexion, that was sanguine, capable of a false fire, and willing to have the glory of resolutions and fine persuasions at so easy a rate. Let it now be supposed that people of another complexion should put such questions as these:—Do you know and feel that all your sins are forgiven you? Do you

know when and where, and at what time and in what place, you received this forgiveness? Do you know when and where you ceased to be one of those sinners called to repentance, and became one of those whole that need no physician? Have you an absolute assurance of your salvation, and that you cannot possibly fall from your state of grace? Now, who may be thought to be the most likely to come into this religion? Not he who is deeply humble, that abhors self-justification, and truly knows the free grace of God. Such a one would say: I believe the forgiveness of sins with as much assurance as I believe there is a God; I believe that Jesus Christ does now to all those who have a true and full faith in Him that which He did to those who so believed in Him when He was upon earth; that He forgives their sins as immediately, as certainly, as fully, as when He said by an outward voice, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee;' I believe that in this faith lies all our strength and possibility of growing up in the inward man and recovering that image and likeness of God in which we were created; that to this faith all things are possible, and that by this faith every enemy we have, whether he be within us or without us, may, and must, be entirely overcome; I believe that to repentance and faith in Christ salvation is made as secure and as absolutely assured as paradise was made secure to the thief upon the cross by the express word of our Saviour; I believe that my own sins, were they greater and more than the sins of the whole world, would be wholly expiated and taken away by my faith in the Blood and Life of my Blessed Saviour; but if I now want to add something of my own to this faith, if this great and glorious faith is defective and saves me not till I can add my own sense and my own feeling to it at such a time or place, is not this saying in the plainest manner that faith alone cannot justify me? Is not this making this faith in the Blood of Christ defective and insufficient to my salvation till a self-satisfaction, an own pleasure, an own taste are joined with it? Might it not better be said that

faith could not justify me till it had works, than that it cannot justify me without these inward workings, feelings, witnessings of my own mind, sense, and imagination? Is there not likely to be a more hurtful self-seeking, a more hurtful self-confidence, a more hurtful self-trust, a more dangerous self-deceit, in making faith to depend upon these inward workings and feelings than in making it depend upon outward good works of our own? . . .

NOT CHARACTER

I hope it will here be observed, that I no way depreciate, undervalue, or reject any particular impressions, strong influences, delightful sensations, or heavenly foretastes in the inward man, which the Holy Spirit of God may at times bestow upon good souls. I leave them their just worth, I acknowledge them to be the good gifts of God, as special calls and awakenings to forsake our sins, as great incitements to deny ourselves, and take up our cross, and follow Christ with greater courage and resolution. They may be as beneficial and useful to us in our spiritual life as other blessings of God, such as prosperity, health, happy complexion, and the like. But then, as outward blessings, remarkable providences, religious complexion, and the like, may be very serviceable to awaken us, and excite our conversion to God, and much assist the spiritual life, so they may very easily have a contrary effect, serve to fill us with pride and self-satisfaction, and make us esteem ourselves as greater favourites of God than those that want them, who may yet be led to a higher degree of goodness, be in a more purified state, and stand nearer to God, in their poor, naked, and destitute condition, than we in the midst of great blessings. It is just thus with regard to those inward blessings of the spiritual life. They are so many spurs, motives, and incitements to live wholly unto God; yet they may instead of that fill us with self-satisfaction and self-esteem, and prompt us to despise others that want them, as in a poor, mean, and reprobate state, who yet may be higher advanced, and stand in a nearer degree of union with God, by humility, faith, resignation, and pure love in their inward poverty

and emptiness, than we who live high upon spiritual satisfactions and can talk of nothing but our feasts of fat things.

All that I would here say of these inward delights and enjoyments is only this: they are not holiness, they are not piety, they are not perfection, but they are God's gracious allurements and calls to seek after holiness and spiritual perfection. They are not to be sought for for their own sakes; they are not to be prayed for, but with such a perfect indifference and resignation as we must pray for any earthly blessings; they are not to be rested in as the perfection of our souls, but to be received as cordials, that suppose us to be sick, faint, and languishing, and ought rather to convince us that we are as yet but babes, than that we are really men of God.—[*Christian Regeneration*, pp. 80, 91.]

SENSIBILITY

THIS salvation, which is God's mercy to the fallen soul of man merely as fallen, must be something that meets every man; and which every man, as fallen, has something that directs him to turn to it. For as the fall of man is the reason of this mercy, so the fall must be the guide to it. The want must shew the thing that is wanted. And, therefore, the manifestation of this one salvation or mercy to man must have a nature suitable, not to this or that great reader of history or able critic in Hebrew roots and Greek phrases, but suitable to the common state and condition of every son of Adam. It must be something as grounded in human nature as the fall itself is, which wants no art to make it known, but to which the common nature of man is the only guide in one man as well as another. Now, this something, which is thus obvious to every man, and which opens the way to Christian redemption in every soul, is a sense of the vanity and misery of this world, and a prayer of faith and hope to God to be raised to a better state.

SALVATION SELF-EVIDENT

Now, in this sensibility, which every man's own nature leads him into, lies the whole of man's salvation. Here the mercy of God and the misery of man are met together; here the fall and the redemption kiss each other. This is the Christianity which is as old as the fall, which alone saved the first man, and can alone save the last. This is it, on which hang all the law and the prophets, and which fulfils them both; for they have only this end, to turn man from the lusts of this life to a desire and faith and hope of a better. Thus does the whole of Christian redemp-

tion, considered on the part of man, stand in this degree of nearness and plainness to all mankind; it is as simple and plain as the feeling our own evil and misery, and as natural as the desire of being saved and delivered from it. This is the Christianity which every man must first be made sensible of, not from hearsay, but as a growth or degree of life within himself, before he can have any fitness, or the least pretence to judge or speak a word about the further mysteries of the gospel. . . . But now, if you turn from all these idle debates and demonstrations of reason to that which is sensible and self-evident in you, then you have a sensible, self-evident proof of the true God of life and light and love and goodness as manifest to you as your own life. For, with the same self-evident certainty as you know that you think and are alive, you know that there is goodness, love, benevolence, meekness, compassion, wisdom, peace, joy. Now, this is the self-evident God that forces Himself to be known and found and felt in every man, in the same certainty of self-evidence as every man feels and finds his own thoughts and life. And this is the God Whose Being and Providence thus self-evident in us call for our worship and love and adoration and obedience to Him. And this worship and love and adoration and conformity to the Divine goodness is our true belief in, and sure knowledge of, the self-evident God. Atheism is not the denial of a first omnipotent cause, but is purely and solely nothing else but the disowning, forsaking, and renouncing the goodness, virtue, benevolence, and meekness of the Divine Nature, that has made itself thus self-evident in us as the true object of our worship, conformity, love, and adoration. This is the One True God, or the Deity of goodness, virtue, and love, etc., the certainty of Whose Being and Providence opens itself to you in the self-evident sensibility of your own nature, and inspires His Likeness and love of His Goodness into you. And as this is the only true knowledge that you can possibly have of God and the Divine Nature, so it is a knowledge not to be debated or lessened

by any objections of reason, but is as self-evident as your own life. But to find or know God in reality, by any outward proofs, or by anything but by God Himself made manifest and self-evident in you, will never be your case either here or hereafter. For neither God, nor heaven, nor hell, nor the devil, nor the world and the flesh, can be any otherwise knowable in you, or by you, but by their own existence and manifestation in you. And all pretended knowledge of any of these things, beyond or without this self-evident sensibility of their birth within you, is only such knowledge of them as the blind man hath of that light that never entered into him. And as this is our only true knowledge, so every man is by his birth and nature brought into a certain and self-evident sensibility of all these things. And if we bring ourselves by reasoning and dispute into an uncertainty about them, it is an uncertainty that we have created for ourselves, and comes not from God and nature. For God and nature have made that which is our greatest concern to be our greatest certainty, and to be known by us in the same self-evidence as our own pain or pleasure is. For nothing is religion, or the truth of religion, nothing is good or bad to you but that which is a self-evident birth within you. So that if you call that only God and religion and goodness which truly are so, and can only be known by their self-evident powers and life in you, then you are in the truth, and the truth will make you free from all doubts; and you will no more fear or regard anything that talkative reason can discourse against it, than against your own seeing, hearing, or sensible life. But if you turn from self-evidence to reason and opinion, you turn from the tree of life, and you give yourself up to certain delusion.

Wonder not, therefore, my friend, that, though the mystery under consideration contains the greatest of truths, yet I am unwilling to help you to reason and speculate upon it; for if you attempt to go further in it than self-evidence leads you, you only

go so far out of it or from it. For the end of this mystery is not to furnish new or better matter for reason and opinion, but to bring man home to that sensibility which is self-evident in himself, and to lead him only by self-evident principles to see and find and feel the difference between true and false religion in the same degree of self-evident certainty as he sees and feels the difference between fire and water. This, I say, is the great intent of this mystery; to bring man into a sensibility of God and nature, to know and feel that good and evil, life and death, are a self-evident growth and birth of nature in man, according as his will enters into and works with that which is unchangeably good or unchangeably evil in the working of nature. Now, as the workings of nature are unchangeable in their effects, and that which is naturally good or evil must be always so; and seeing man's life standeth in nature, and must work with it, must have only that good or evil which is unchangeable in nature; and seeing his state in nature, whether good or evil, is and can be only that which the sensible self-evident powers of his own life manifest to him; then you see the fitness and necessity of your keeping steadily to that which is self-evident in you as the very tree of life, the criterion of all that truth and goodness that belongs to you. You see with what good reason Jacob Behmen so often tells you that all that he has written was only to help man to seek and find himself, to see and know his place and state in nature, and how to co-operate with God and nature in generating a birth of Heaven within himself. You may see how you and I should abuse this blessed mystery, should we, instead of only and truly seeking and finding its birth within us, make it a matter of reasoning and opinion.—[*The Way to Divine Knowledge, etc.*, pp. 75, 192.]

PRAYER

THE necessity and reason of prayer is, like all other duties of piety, founded in the Nature of God and the nature of man. OUR VITAL BREATH It is founded in the Nature of God, as He is the Sole Fountain and Cause of all happiness. It is founded in the nature of man, as he is weak and helpless and full of wants. So that prayer is an earnest application or ascent of the heart to God, as to the Sole Cause of all happiness. He, therefore, that most truly feels the misery, corruption, and weakness of his own nature, who is most fully convinced that a relief from all these disorders and a true happiness is to be found in God alone, he who is most fully convinced of these two truths is most fully possessed of the spirit of prayer. There is but one way, therefore, to arrive at a true state of devotion, and that is, to get right notions of ourselves and of the Divine Nature; that having a full view of the relation we bear to God, our souls may as constantly aspire to Him, as they as constantly aspire after happiness. This also shows us the absolute necessity of all those fore-mentioned doctrines of humility, self-denial, and renunciation of the world. For, if devotion is founded in a sense of the poverty, misery, and weakness of our nature, then nothing can more effectually destroy the spirit of devotion than pride, vanity, and indulgence of any kind. These things stop the breath of prayer, and as necessarily extinguish the flame of devotion as water extinguishes common fire. If prayer is also founded in right notions of God, in believing Him to be the Sole Fountain and Cause of all our happiness, then everything that takes this truth out of our minds, that makes us less sensible of it,

makes us so far less capable of devotion, so that worldly cares, vain pleasures, false satisfactions, are all to be renounced that we may be able to pray. For the spirit of prayer has no further hold of us than so far as we see our wants, imperfections, and weakness, and likewise the Infinite Fulness and All-sufficiency of God; when we thoroughly feel these two great truths, then are we in the true spirit of prayer. Would you, therefore, be in the state and temper of devotion, you must practise all those ways of life that may humble you in your own sight; you must forbear all those indulgences and vanities which blind your heart and give you false notions of yourself; you must seek that way of life, accustom yourself to such practices, as may best convince you of the vanity of the world and the littleness of everything but God. This is the only foundation of prayer. When you do not enough see either your own littleness or the greatness of God, when you either seek for pleasure in yourself, or think that it is anywhere to be found except in God, you put yourself out of a state of devotion. For you can desire nothing but what you think you want, and you can desire it only in such a degree as you feel the want of it. It is certain, therefore, that whatever lessens or abates the feeling of your own wants, whatever takes you from looking to God as the only possible relief of them, so far lessens and abates the spirit and fervour of your devotion. We sometimes exhort people to fervour in devotion; but this can only mean as to the outward acts of it. For to exhort people to be fervent in devotion, as that implies a temper of the heart, is to as little purpose as to exhort people to be merry or to be sorry. For these tempers always follow the judgments and opinions of our minds: when we perceive things to be as we like them, then we are merry; when we find things in a contrary state, then we are sorry. It comes to pass after the same manner in devotion: bid a man be fervent in devotion, tell him it is an excellent temper; he knows no more how to go about it than how to be merry, because he is bid to be

so. Stay till old age, till sickness, misfortunes, or the approach of death has convinced him that he has nothing good in himself, that there is nothing valuable in the world, that all that is good, or great, or glorious, is in God alone, and then he will find himself as disposed to devotion and zealous desires after God as the man is disposed to cheerfulness who sees things in that state in which he would have them to be. So that the one and only way to be devout is to see and feel our own weakness, the vanity of the world, and the greatness of God, as dying men see and feel them. It is as impossible to be devout without seeing things in this view as it is impossible to be cheerful without perceiving something in our condition that is according to our mind. Hence, therefore, we may learn to admire the wisdom and divinity of the Christian religion, which calls all its members to humility, self-denial, and a renunciation of worldly tempers as a necessary foundation of piety and devotion. It was in these practices that our Saviour first instituted His religion; it was on these conditions that the apostles embraced it and taught it to others; it was in these doctrines that the primitive Christians became such worthy followers of our Saviour and His apostles. These doctrines are still in the gospel, and till they are to be found in our lives we shall never find ourselves in a state of devotion. For I must again repeat, what my reader cannot too much reflect upon, that, since devotion is an earnest application of the soul to God as the only Cause and Fountain of happiness, it is impossible for the soul to have this desire without having such reasons to produce and support it as are necessary to produce and support other tempers of the mind.

Now, it is impossible for a man to grieve when he finds his condition answering his desires, or to be overjoyed when he finds his state to be full of misery; yet this is as possible, as consistent with our nature, as for a man to aspire after and delight in God as his only happiness, whilst he is delighting in himself and the vanity of the world. So that to pretend to devotion without great

humility and an entire renunciation of all worldly tempers, is to pretend to impossibilities; it is as if a man should pretend to be cheerful whilst he is in vexation and impatience: he must first bring himself to a state of satisfaction and contentment, and then cheerfulness will flow from it. So he that would be devout must first be humble, have a full view of his own miseries and wants and the vanity of the world, and then his soul will be full of desires after God. A proud, or vain, or worldly-minded man may use a manual of prayers, but he cannot be devout, because devotion is the application of an humble heart to God as its only happiness.—[*Christian Perfection*, p. 369.]

MANUALS OF PRAYER

THEOPHILUS.—The best instruction that I can give you as helpful or preparatory to the spirit of prayer is already fully given, where we have set forth the original perfection, the miserable fall, and the glorious redemption of man. It is the true knowledge of these great things that can do all for you which human instruction can do. These things must fill you with a dislike of your present state, drive all earthly desires out of your soul, and create an earnest longing after your first perfection. For prayer cannot be taught you by giving you a book of prayers, but by awakening in you a true sense and knowledge of what you are and what you should be; that so you may see and know and feel what things you want and are to pray for. For a man does not, cannot, pray for anything because a fine petition for it is put into his hands, but because his own condition is a reason and motive for his asking for it. And therefore it is that *The Spirit of Prayer*, in the first part, began with a full discovery and proof of these high and important matters, at the sight of which the world and all that is in it shrinks into nothing, and everything past, present, and to come, awakens in our hearts a continual prayer and longing desire after God, Christ, and eternity.

ACADEMICUS.—I perceive then, Theophilus, that you direct me

entirely to my own prayer in my private devotions, and not to the use of any book. But surely you do not take this to be right in general, that the common people, who are unlearned and mostly of low understandings, should kneel down in private without any borrowed form of prayer, saying only what comes then into their own heads.

THEOPHILUS.—It would be very wrong, Academicus, to condemn a manual as such, or to tell any people, learned or unlearned, that they ought not to make any use of it. This would be quite rash and silly. But it cannot be wrong or hurtful to any body to show that prayer is the natural language of the heart, and, as such, does not want any form or borrowed words. Now, all that has been said of manuals of prayers only amounts to thus much, that they are not necessary, nor the most natural and excellent way of praying. If they happen to be necessary to any person, or to be his most excellent way, it is because the natural real prayer of his heart is already engaged, loving, wishing, and longing after the things of this life, which makes him so insensible of his spiritual wants, so blind and dead as to the things of God, that he cannot pray for them but so far as the words of other people are put into his mouth. If a man is blind and knows it not, he may be told to pray for sight. If he is sick and knows nothing of it, he may be told to pray for health; so, if the soul is in this state with regard to its spiritual wants, a manual may be of good use to it, not so much by helping it to pray, as by showing it at what a miserable distance it is from those tempers which belong to prayer. But when a man has had so much benefit from the gospel as to know his own misery, his want of a Redeemer, who He is, and how He is to be found, there everything seems to be done, both to awaken and direct his prayer and make it a true praying in and by the Spirit. For, when the heart really pants and longs after God, its prayer is a praying as moved and animated by the Spirit of God; it is the breath or inspiration of God, stirring, moving, and opening itself in the heart.

For though the earthly nature, our old man, can oblige or accustom himself to take heavenly words at certain times into his mouth, yet this is a certain truth, that nothing ever did or can have the least desire or tendency to ascend to heaven but that which came down from heaven; and, therefore, nothing in the heart can pray, aspire, and long after God but the Spirit of God moving and stirring in it. Every breath, therefore, of the true spirit of prayer can be nothing else but the breath of the Spirit of God, breathing, inspiring, and moving the heart in all its variety of motions and affections towards God. And, therefore, every time a good desire stirs in the heart, a good prayer goes out of it that reaches God as being the fruit and work of His Holy Spirit. When any man, feeling his corruption and the power of sin in his soul, looks up to God with true earnestness of faith and desire to be delivered from it, whether with words or without words, how can he pray better? What need of any change of thoughts, or words, or any variety of expressions, when the one faith and desire of his heart made known to God, and continued in, is not only all, but the most perfect prayer he can make? Again, suppose the soul in another state, feeling with joy its offered Redeemer, and opening its heart for the full reception of Him; if it stands in this state of wishing and longing for the birth of Christ, how can its prayer be in an higher degree of request? Or, if it breaks out frequently in these words: 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly, with all Thy holy nature, spirit, and tempers into my soul,' is there any occasion to enlarge or alter these words into another form of expression? Can he do better, or pray more, than by continually standing from time to time in this state of wishing to have Christ formed in him? Nay, is it not more likely that his heart should be more divided and dissipated by a numerous change of expressions than by keeping united to one expression that sets forth all that he wants? For it is the reality, the steadiness, and continuity of the desire that is the goodness of prayer, and its qualification to receive all

that it wants. Our Lord said to one that came to Him: 'What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?' He answered: 'Lord, that I may receive my sight,' and he received it. Another said: 'Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean,' and he was cleansed. Tell me: what learning or fine parts are required to make such prayers as these? and yet what wonders of relief are recorded in Scripture as given to such short prayers as these! Or, tell me what blessing of prayer or faith or love may not now be obtained in the same way, and with as few words as then was done? Every man, therefore, that has any feeling of the weight of his sin, or any true desire to be delivered from it by Christ, has learning and capacity enough to make his own prayer. For praying is not speaking forth eloquently, but simply the true desire of the heart; and the heart, simple and plain in good desires, is in the truest state of preparation for all the gifts and graces of God. And this I must tell you, that the most simple souls that have accustomed themselves to speak their own desires and wants to God in such short but true breathings of their hearts to Him, will soon know more of prayer, and the mysteries of it, than any persons who have only their knowledge from learning and learned books.—[*The Spirit of Prayer*, p. 176.]

THE ART OF PRAYER

THE first thing that you are to do when you are upon your knees is to shut your eyes, and, with a short silence, let your soul place itself in the presence of God; that is, you are to use this, or some other better method, to separate yourself from all common thoughts, and make your heart as sensible as you can of the Divine Presence. Now, if this recollection of spirit is necessary, as who can say it is not, then how poorly must they perform their devotions who are always in a hurry, who begin them in haste, and hardly allow themselves time to repeat their very form with any gravity or attention! Theirs is properly saying prayers instead of praying. If you was to use yourself (as far as

you can) to pray always in the same place; if you was to reserve that place for devotion, and not allow yourself to do anything common in it; if you was never to be there yourself but in times of devotion; if any little room (or, if that cannot be), if any particular part of a room was thus used, this kind of consecration of it as a place holy unto God would have an effect upon your mind and dispose you to such tempers as would very much assist your devotion. For, by having a place thus sacred in your room, it would, in some measure, resemble a chapel or house of God. This would dispose you to be always in the spirit of religion when you was there, and fill you with wise and holy thoughts when you was by yourself. Your own apartment would raise in your mind such sentiments as you have when you stand near an altar, and you would be afraid of thinking or doing anything that was foolish near that place which is the place of prayer and holy intercourse with God. When you begin your petitions, use such various expressions of the attributes of God as may make you most sensible of the greatness and power of the Divine Nature. Begin, therefore, in words like these: 'Oh Being of all beings, Fountain of all light and glory, gracious Father of men and angels, Whose universal Spirit is everywhere present giving life and light and joy to all angels in heaven and all creatures upon earth,' etc. For these representations of the Divine attributes, which show us, in some degree, the Majesty and Greatness of God, are an excellent means of raising our hearts into lively acts of worship and adoration. What is the reason that most people are so much affected with this petition in the burial service of our church: 'Yet, O Lord God most holy, O Lord most mighty, O holy and most merciful Saviour, deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death'? It is because the joining together so many great expressions gives such a description of the greatness of the Divine Majesty as naturally affects every sensible mind.

Although, therefore, prayer does not consist in fine words, or

studied expressions, yet, as words speak to the soul, as they have a certain power of raising thoughts in the soul, so those words which speak of God in the highest manner which most fully express the power and presence of God, which raise thoughts in the soul most suitable to the greatness and providence of God, are the most useful and most edifying in our prayers. When you direct any of your petitions to our Blessed Lord, let it be in some expressions of this kind: 'O Saviour of the World, God of God, Light of Light; Thou that art the Brightness of Thy Father's Glory and the express Image of His Person; Thou that art the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and End of all things; Thou that hast destroyed the power of the devil, that hast overcome death; Thou that art entered into the Holy of Holies, that sittest at the right hand of the Father, that art high above all thrones and principalities, that makest intercession for all the world; Thou that art the Judge of the quick and dead; Thou that wilt speedily come down in Thy Father's Glory to reward all men according to their works, be Thou my light and my peace,' etc. For such representations, which describe so many characters of our Saviour's nature and power, are not only proper acts of adoration, but will, if they are repeated with any attention, fill our hearts with the highest fervours of true devotion.

Again, if you ask any particular grace of our Blessed Lord, let it be in some manner like this: 'O Holy Jesus, Son of the Most High God, Thou that wast scourged at a pillar, stretched and nailed upon a cross for the sins of the world, unite me to Thy cross, and fill my soul with Thy holy, humble, and suffering Spirit. O Fountain of Mercy, Thou that didst save the thief upon the cross, save me from the guilt of a sinful life: Thou that didst cast seven devils out of Mary Magdalene, cast out of my heart all evil thoughts and wicked tempers. O Giver of Life, Thou that didst raise Lazarus from the dead, raise up my soul from the death and darkness of sin. Thou that didst give to Thy apostles power

over unclean spirits, give me power over my own heart. Thou that didst appear unto Thy disciples when the doors were shut, do Thou appear unto me in the secret apartment of my heart. Thou that didst cleanse the lepers, heal the sick, and give sight to the blind, cleanse my heart, heal the disorders of my soul, and fill me with heavenly light.' Now, these kinds of appeals have a double advantage: first, as they are so many proper acts of our faith, whereby we not only shew our belief of the miracles of Christ, but turn them at the same time into so many instances of worship and adoration; secondly, as they strengthen and increase the faith of our prayers, by presenting to our minds so many instances of that power and goodness which we call upon for our own assistance. For he that appeals to Christ, as casting out devils and raising the dead, has then a powerful motive in his mind to pray earnestly and depend faithfully upon His assistance.

Again, in order to fill your prayers with excellent strains of devotion it may be of use to you to observe this further rule: when at any time, either in reading the Scripture or any book of piety, you meet with a passage that more than ordinarily affects your mind and seems as it were to give your heart a new motion towards God, you should try to turn it into the form of a petition, and then give it a place in your prayers. By this means you would be often improving your prayers and storing yourself with proper forms of making the desires of your heart known unto God. At all the stated hours of prayer it will be of great benefit to you to have something fixed and something at liberty in your devotions. You should have some fixed subject which is constantly to be the chief matter of your prayer at that particular time, and yet have liberty to add such other petitions as your condition may then require. For instance: as the morning is to you the beginning of a new life, as God has then given you a new enjoyment of yourself, and a fresh entrance into the world, it is highly proper that your first devotions should be a praise and

thanksgiving to God, as for a new creation, and that you should offer and devote body and soul, all that you are and all that you have, to His service and glory. Receive, therefore, every day as a resurrection from death, as a new enjoyment of life, meet every rising sun with such sentiments of God's goodness as if you had seen it and all things new created upon your account, and under the sense of so great a blessing let your joyful heart praise and magnify so good and glorious a Creator. Let, therefore, praise and thanksgiving and oblation of yourself unto God be always the fixed and certain subject of your first prayers in the morning; and then take the liberty of adding such other devotions as the accidental difference of your state, or the accidental difference of your heart, shall then make most needful and expedient for you. For one of the greatest benefits of private devotion consists in rightly adapting our prayers to those two conditions,—the difference of our state, and the difference of our hearts. By the difference of our state is meant the difference of our external state or condition: as of sickness, health, pains, losses, disappointments, troubles, particular mercies or judgments from God; all sorts of kindnesses, injuries, or reproaches from other people. Now, as these are great parts of our state of life, as they make great difference in it by continually changing, so our devotion will be made doubly beneficial to us when it watches to receive and sanctify all these changes of our state, and turns them all into so many occasions of a more particular application to God of such thanksgivings, such resignation, such petitions, as our present state more especially requires. And he that makes every change in his state a reason of presenting unto God some particular petitions suitable to that change, will soon find that he has taken an excellent means, not only of praying with fervour, but of living as he prays.

The next condition to which we are always to adapt some part of our prayers, is the difference of our hearts; by which is meant

the different state of the tempers of our hearts, as of love, joy, peace, tranquillity, dulness and dryness of spirit, anxiety, discontent, motions of envy and ambition, dark and disconsolate thoughts, resentments, fretfulness, and peevish tempers. Now, as these tempers, through the weakness of our nature, will have their succession more or less even in pious minds, so we should constantly make the present state of our heart the reason of some particular application to God. If we are in the delightful calm of sweet and easy passions, of love and joy in God, we should then offer the grateful tribute of thanksgiving to God for the possession of so much happiness, thankfully owning and acknowledging Him as the bountiful Giver of it all. If, on the other hand, we feel ourselves laden with heavy passions, with dulness of spirit, anxiety, and uneasiness, we must then look up to God in acts of humility, confessing our unworthiness, opening our troubles to Him, beseeching Him in His good time to lessen the weight of our infirmities, and to deliver us from such passions as oppose the purity and perfection of our souls. Now, by thus watching and attending to the present state of our hearts, and suiting some of our petitions exactly to their wants, we shall not only be well acquainted with the disorders of our souls, but also be well exercised in the method of curing them. By this prudent and wise applica tion of our prayers we shall get all the relief from them that is possible; and the very changeableness of our hearts will prove a means of exercising a greater variety of holy tempers.

Now, by all that has here been said, you will easily perceive that persons careful of the greatest benefit of prayer ought to have a great share in the forming and composing their own devotions. As to that part of their prayers which is always fixed to one certain subject, in that they may use the help of forms composed by other persons; but in that part of their prayers which they are always to suit to the present state of their life and the present state of their heart, there they must let the sense of their own

condition help them to such kinds of petition, thanksgiving, or resignation as their present state more especially requires. Happy are they who have this business and employment upon their hands! . . .

Lastly, seeing our imaginations have great power over our hearts and can mightily affect us with their representations, it would be of great use to you, if, at the beginning of your devotions, you was to imagine to yourself some such representations as might heat and warm your heart into a temper suitable to those prayers that you are then about to offer unto God. As thus: before you begin your psalm of praise and rejoicing in God, make this use of your imagination. Be still, and imagine to yourself that you saw the heavens open and the glorious choirs of cherubims and seraphims about the throne of God. Imagine that you hear the music of those angelic voices that cease not day and night to sing the glories of Him that is, and was, and is to come. Help your imagination with such passages of Scripture as these: Revelation vii. 9, 'I beheld, and lo, in heaven a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands. And they cried with a loud voice, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and strength, be unto our God, for ever and ever. Amen.' Think upon this till your imagination has carried you above the clouds, till it has placed you amongst those heavenly beings, and made you long to bear a part in their eternal music. If you will but use yourself to this method, and let your imagination dwell upon such representations as these, you will soon find it to be an excellent means of raising the spirit of devotion within you. Always, therefore, begin your psalm or song of praise with these

imaginations, and at every verse of it imagine yourself amongst those heavenly companions, that your voice is added to theirs, and that angels join with you, and you with them, and that you with a poor and low voice are singing that on earth which they are singing in heaven. Again, sometimes imagine that you had been one of those that joined with our Blessed Saviour when He sung an hymn. Strive to imagine to yourself with what majesty He looked; fancy that you had stood close by Him surrounded with His glory. Think how your heart would have been inflamed, what ecstasies of joy you would have then felt, when singing with the Son of God. Think again and again with what joy and devotion you would then have sung had this been really your happy state, and what a punishment you should have thought it to have been then silent; and let this teach you how to be affected with psalms and hymns of thanksgiving. Again, sometimes imagine to yourself that you saw holy David with his hands upon his harp, and his eyes fixed upon heaven, calling in transport upon all the creation, sun and moon, light and darkness, day and night, men and angels, to join with his rapturous soul in praising the Lord of Heaven.—[*Serious Call*, pp. 243, 251, 285.]

THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS

LET me now only add this one word more, that he who has learned to pray has learned the greatest secret of a holy and happy life. Which way soever else we let loose our hearts, they will return unto us again empty and weary. Time will convince the vainest and blindest minds that happiness is no more to be found in the things of this world than it is to be dug out of the earth. But when the motions of our heart are motions of piety tending to God in constant acts of devotion, love, and desire, then we have found rest unto our souls. Then is it that we have conquered the misery of our nature, and neither love nor desire in vain. Then is it that we have found out a good suited to our natures, that is equal to all our wants, that is a constant source of

comfort and refreshment, that will fill us with peace and joyful expectations here and eternal happiness hereafter. For he that lives in the spirit and temper of devotion, whose heart is always full of God, lives at the top of human happiness, and is the farthest removed from all the vanities and vexations which disturb and weary the minds of men that are devoted to the world.—[*Christian Perfection*, p. 403.]

INTERCESSORY PRAYER

A DISCOVERY IN SANCTIFICATION

BY intercession is meant a praying to God and interceding with Him for our fellow-creatures. Our Blessed Lord hath recommended His love to us as the pattern and example of our love to one another. As, therefore, He is continually making intercession for us all, so ought we to intercede and pray for one another. . . .

A frequent intercession with God, earnestly beseeching Him to forgive the sins of all mankind, to bless them with His Spirit, and bring them to everlasting happiness, is the divinest exercise that the heart of man can be engaged in. Be daily therefore on your knees in a solemn deliberate performance of this devotion, praying for others in such forms, with such length, importunity, and earnestness, as you use for yourself, and you will find all little ill-natured passions die away, your heart grow great and generous, delighting in the common happiness of others as you used only to delight in your own. For he that daily prays to God that all men may be happy in heaven, takes the likeliest way to make him wish for and delight in their happiness on earth. And it is hardly possible for you to beseech and entreat God to make any one happy in the highest enjoyments of His glory to all eternity, and yet be troubled to see him enjoy the much smaller gifts of God in this short and low state of human life. For how strange and unnatural would it be to pray to God to grant health and a longer life to a sick man, and at the same time to envy him the poor pleasure of agreeable medicines? Yet this would be no more strange or unnatural than to pray to God that your neighbour may enjoy the

highest degrees of His mercy and favour, and yet at the same time envy him the little credit and figure he hath amongst his fellow-creatures. When, therefore, you have once habituated your heart to a serious performance of this holy intercession, you have done a great deal to render it incapable of spite and envy, and to make it naturally delight in the happiness of all mankind. This is the natural effect of a general intercession for all mankind. But the greatest benefits of it are then received when it descends to such particular instances as our state and condition in life more particularly require of us.

Though we are to treat all mankind as neighbours and brethren as any occasion offers, yet, as we can only live in the actual society of a few, and are by our state and condition more particularly related to some than others, so when our intercession is made an exercise of love and care for those amongst whom our lot is fallen, or who belong to us in a nearer relation, it then becomes the greatest benefit to ourselves and produces its best effects in our own hearts. If, therefore, you should always change and alter your intercessions according as the needs and necessities of your neighbours or acquaintance seem to require, beseeching God to deliver them from such and such particular evils, or to grant them this or that particular gift or blessing, such intercessions, besides the great charity of them, would have a mighty effect upon your own heart, as disposing you to every other good office, and to the exercise of every other virtue towards such persons as have so often a place in your prayers. This would make it pleasant to you to be courteous, civil, and condescending to all about you, and make you unable to say or do a rude or hard thing to those for whom you had used yourself to be so kind and compassionate in your prayers. For there is nothing that makes us love a man so much as praying for him; and when you can once do this sincerely for any man you have fitted your soul for the performance of everything that is kind and civil towards him. This will fill your

heart with a generosity and tenderness that will give you a better and sweeter behaviour than anything that is called fine breeding and good manners. By considering yourself as an advocate with God for your neighbours and acquaintance you would never find it hard to be at peace with them yourself. It would be easy to you to bear with and forgive those for whom you particularly implored the divine mercy and forgiveness. Such prayers as these amongst neighbours and acquaintance would unite them to one another in the strongest bonds of love and tenderness. It would exalt and ennoble their souls, and teach them to consider one another in a higher state, as members of a spiritual society, that are created for the enjoyment of the common blessings of God, and fellow-heirs of the same future glory. And by being thus desirous that every one should have their full share of the favours of God, they would not only be content but glad to see one another happy in the little enjoyments of this transitory life. . . .

If parents should thus make themselves advocates and intercessors with God for their children, constantly applying to Heaven in behalf of them, nothing would be more likely not only to bless their children, but also to form and dispose their own minds to the performance of everything that was excellent and praiseworthy. I do not suppose but that the generality of parents remember their children in their prayers, and call upon God to bless them. But the thing here intended is not a general remembrance of them, but a regular method of recommending all their particular needs and necessities unto God, and of praying for every such particular grace and virtue for them as their state and condition of life shall seem to require. The state of parents is a holy state, in some degree like that of the priesthood, and calls upon them to bless their children with their prayers and sacrifices to God. Thus it was that holy Job watched over and blessed his children; he sanctified them, he rose up early in the morning and offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all. If parents,

therefore, considering themselves in this light, should be daily calling upon God in a solemn, deliberate manner, altering and extending their intercessions as the state and growth of their children required, such devotion would have a mighty influence upon the rest of their lives. It would make them very circumspect in the government of themselves; prudent and careful of every thing they said or did, lest their example should hinder that which they so constantly desired in their prayers. If a father was daily making particular prayers to God that He would please to inspire his children with true piety, great humility, and strict temperance, what could be more likely to make the father himself become exemplary in these virtues? How naturally would he grow ashamed of wanting such virtues as he thought necessary for his children! So that his prayers for their piety would be a certain means of exalting his own to its greatest height. If a father thus considered himself as an intercessor with God for his children to bless them with his prayers, what more likely means to make him aspire after every degree of holiness that he might thereby be fitter to obtain blessings from heaven for them? How would such thoughts make him avoid everything that was sinful and displeasing to God, lest when he prayed for his children God should reject his prayers! How tenderly, how religiously, would such a father converse with his children, whom he considered as his little spiritual flock, whose virtues he was to form by his example, encourage by his authority, nourish by his counsel, and prosper by his prayers to God for them! How fearful would he be of all greedy and unjust ways of raising their fortune, of bringing them up in pride and indulgence, or of making them too fond of the world, lest he should thereby render them incapable of those graces which he was so often beseeching God to grant them!

These being the plain, natural, happy effects of this intercession, all parents, I hope, who have the real welfare of their children at heart, who desire to be their true friends and benefactors, and

to live amongst them in the spirit of wisdom and piety, will not neglect so great a means, both of raising their own virtue and of doing an eternal good to those who are so near and dear to them by the strongest ties of nature.

Lastly, if all people, when they feel the first approaches of resentment, envy, or contempt towards others, or if, in all little disagreements and misunderstandings whatever, they should, instead of indulging their minds with little low reflections, have recourse at such times to a more particular and extraordinary intercession with God for such persons as had raised their envy, resentment, or discontent,—this would be a certain way to prevent the growth of all uncharitable tempers. If you was also to form your prayer or intercession at that time to the greatest degree of contrariety to that temper which you was then in, it would be an excellent means of raising your heart to the greatest state of perfection. As, for instance, when at any time you find in your heart motions of envy towards any person, whether on account of his riches, power, reputation, learning, or advancement, if you should immediately betake yourself at that time to your prayers, and pray to God to bless and prosper him in that very thing which raised your envy, if you should express and repeat your petitions in the strongest terms, beseeching God to grant him all the happiness from the enjoyment of it that can possibly be received, you would soon find it to be the best antidote in the world to expel the venom of that poisonous passion. This would be such a triumph over yourself, would so humble and reduce your heart into obedience and order, that the devil would even be afraid of tempting you again in the same manner when he saw the temptation turned into so great a means of amending and reforming the state of your heart. Again, if in any little difference or misunderstandings that you happened to have at any time with a relation, a neighbour, or any one else, you should then pray for them in a more extraordinary manner than you ever did before, beseeching God to give them

every grace and blessing and happiness you can think of, you would have taken the speediest method that can be of reconciling all differences and clearing up all misunderstandings. You would then think nothing too great to be forgiven, stay for no condescensions, need no mediation of a third person, but be glad to testify your love and good-will to him who had so high a place in your secret prayers. This would be the mighty power of such Christian devotion; it would remove all peevish passions, soften your heart into the most tender condescensions, and be the best arbitrator of all differences that happened betwixt you and any of your acquaintance. The greatest resentments amongst friends and neighbours most often arise from poor punctilios and little mistakes in conduct,—a certain sign that their friendship is merely human, not founded upon religious considerations, or supported by such a course of mutual prayer for one another as the first Christians used. For such devotion must necessarily either destroy such tempers or be itself destroyed by them. You cannot possibly have any ill-temper, or show any unkind behaviour, to a man for whose welfare you are so much concerned as to be his advocate with God in private.—[*Serious Call*, pp. 391, 413, 424.]

READING THE GOSPELS

TO DRINK IN THEIR SPIRIT

WE see the height of our calling,—that we are called to follow the example of our Lord and Master, and to go through this world with His spirit and temper. Now, nothing is so likely a means to fill us with His spirit and temper as to be frequent in reading the Gospels which contain the history of His life and conversation in the world. We are apt to think that we have sufficiently read a book when we have so read it as to know what it contains. This reading may be sufficient as to many books, but as to the Gospels we are not to think that we have ever read them enough because we have often read and heard what they contain. But we must read them as we do our prayers, not to know what they contain, but to fill our hearts with the spirit of them. There is as much difference betwixt reading and reading as there is betwixt praying and praying. And as no one prays well but he that is daily and constant in prayer, so no one can read the Scriptures to sufficient advantage but he that is daily and constant in the reading of them. By thus conversing with our Blessed Lord, looking into His actions and manner of life, hearing His Divine sayings, His heavenly instructions, His accounts of the terrors of the damned, His descriptions of the glory of the righteous, we should find our hearts formed and disposed to hunger and thirst after righteousness. Happy they who saw the Son of God upon earth converting sinners and calling fallen spirits to return to God! And next happy are we who have His discourses, doctrines, actions, and miracles, which then converted Jews and heathens into saints and martyrs, still preserved to fill us with the same heavenly light, and lead us to the same state of glory.—[*Christian Perfection*, p. 436.]

FASTING

I KEEP UNDER MY BODY

THE whole of the matter is this: Christians are called from a state of disorder, sin, and ignorance to a state of holiness and resemblance of the Divine Nature. If, therefore, there are any things, or any ways that corrupt our minds, support our vanity, increase our blindness, or nourish sensuality, all these are as necessarily to be avoided as it is necessary to be holy. If there are any denials or mortifications that purify and enlighten the soul, that lessen the power of bodily passions, that raise us to a heavenly affection and make us taste and relish the things that be of God, these are as necessarily to be practised as it is necessary to believe in Jesus Christ. So that the matter comes to this: if there are no indulgences in eating that do us harm, then fasting is of no use. But if there are, if they enslave the soul and give it a sensual taste, then we are as much obliged to abstain from what does us this harm, as we are obliged to pray for anything than can do us good. No Christian that knows anything of the gospel can doubt whether fasting be a common duty of Christianity, since our Saviour has placed it along with secret alms and private prayer: When thou fastest, anoint thy head and wash thy face, that thou appear not unto men to fast, but to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. So that the same instructions and the same reasons are given for private fasting as for secret alms and private prayer,—that thy Father which seeth in secret may reward thee openly. Now as it is manifestly entitled to the same reward, it is manifestly put

upon the same foot as private prayer, and as equally acceptable to God. Eating and drinking are the common support of life; but then, as they are the support of a corrupt life, the nourishment of a disordered body that weighs down the soul, whose appetites and tempers are in a state of enmity with the life and purity of the soul, it is necessary that we take care so to support the life of the body as not to occasion the sickness and death of the soul. The fall of man consists very much in the fall of the soul into the dominion and power of the body, whose joy and health and strength is often the slavery, weakness, and infirmity of the soul. How far our bodies affect our habits or ways of thinking may be seen by the difference between sickness and health, youth and old age. These different states of the body alter the whole turn of our minds, and give us new ways of thinking, all owing to the different strength of bodily appetites and tempers. No sooner is the body weakened by any occasion but the soul is more at liberty, speaks higher for itself, and begins to act more reasonably. . . . A man that makes every day a day of full and cheerful meals will by degrees make the happiness of every day depend upon it, and consider everything with regard to it. He will go to church or stay at home as it suits with his dinner, and not scruple to tell you that he generally eats too heartily to go to the afternoon service. Now, such people are under a worse disorder of body than he that has the jaundice, and have their judgment more perverted than he that sees all things yellow. For how can they be said to perceive the difference of things who have more taste for the preparations of the kitchen than for the joys and comforts of the house of God, who choose rather to make themselves unfit for divine service than to baulk the pleasure of a full meal? And this not by chance or upon some unusual occasion, but by a constant intended course of life. Let such people deal faithfully with themselves, and search out their spirit. Can they think that they are born again of God, that they have the Spirit

of Christ, who are thus subject to the pleasures of gluttony? Can they be said to treat their bodies as temples of the Holy Ghost who make them unfit for the holy service of public worship? . . .

Persons of weak and infirm constitutions have often as much necessity of self-denial as others of the most healthful bodies. For their very state, it may be, has taught them indulgence. By being accustomed to so much care of themselves, they become no better than perpetual nurses of themselves, and consequently are too much devoted to that which is not the one thing needful. Weakly people may as well be epicures and have the same sensuality to conquer as other people, and consequently have the same necessity of their degree of abstinence and denial that others have. Let such people have recourse to the example of Timothy, who was an apostolical bishop. His history teaches us that he was weakly, and subject to frequent infirmities, who, notwithstanding, may be supposed to have enjoyed the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost; yet in this state of divine greatness, and bodily weakness, he wanted the authority and advice of an apostle to persuade him to drink any thing besides water. This we are sufficiently taught by the apostle's giving this advice in his epistle to him, 'Drink no longer water (that is, nothing but water), but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thine often infirmities.' The world abounds with people who are weakly and tender merely by their indulgences; they have bad nerves, low spirits, and frequent indispositions, through irregularity, idleness, and indulgence. Now these people, it is true, are not fit for fasting, and, perhaps, if they were to deal faithfully with themselves, they would find that they are as unfit for most other exercises of religion. And consequently, if their condition might be pleaded as an objection against the necessity of fasting, it might as well be pleaded against the necessity of half the duties of Christianity.—[*Christian Perfection,* pp. 195, 201, 207.

EXCUSES TO ESCAPE

YOU, perhaps, now find some pretences to excuse yourselves from that severity of fasting and self-denial which the first Christians practised. You fancy that human nature is grown weaker, and that the difference of climates may make it not possible for you to observe their methods of self-denial and austerity in these colder countries. But all this is but pretence. For the change is not in the outward state of things, but in the inward state of our minds. When there is the same spirit in us that there was in the apostles and primitive Christians, when we feel the weight of religion as they did, when we have their faith and hope, we shall take up our cross and deny ourselves, and live in such methods of mortification as they did. Had St. Paul lived in a cold country, had he had a constitution made weak with a sickly stomach and often infirmities, he would have done as he advised Timothy, he would have mixed a little wine with his water. But still he would have lived in a state of self-denial and mortification. He would have given this same account of himself: 'I therefore so run, not as uncertainly, so fight I, not as one that beateth the air. But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.'—[*Serious Call*, p. 237.]

SELF-DENIAL

AN action is not good or virtuous because it is self-denial, but because it is according to duty; and he who, through long habits of goodness, has made the practice of virtue to have less of self-denial in it, is the most virtuous man.—[*Fable of the Bees*, p. 36.]

WHERE PAIN ENDS GAIN ENDS

HAVING observed thus much concerning the reasonableness of tempers or duties which religion demands, I proceed now to shew wherein the reasonableness and necessity of self-denial consists. If a person was to walk upon a rope, across some great river, and he was bid to deny himself the pleasure of walking in silver shoes, or looking about at the beauty of the waves, or listening to the noise of sailors,—if he was commanded to deny himself the advantage of fishing by the way, would there be any hardship in such self-denial? Would not such self-denials be as reasonable as commanding him to love things that will do him good, or to avoid things that are hurtful? Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, saith our Blessed Saviour. Now, if Christians are to walk in a narrow way that leadeth to eternal life, the chief business of a Christian must be to deny himself all those things which may either stop or lead him out of his narrow way. And if they think that pleasures and indulgences are consistent with their keeping this narrow way, they think as reasonably as if the man upon the rope should think that he might safely use silver shoes, or stop in his way to catch fish. Again, if a man that was a slave to sottishness and

stupefying pleasures that rendered him averse from all exercises of the mind, was yet obliged, in order to save his life, to attain to such or such a degree of mathematical knowledge; must it not be as necessary for such a one to deny himself those indulgences which increased his stupidity as it would be necessary to study the relations of figures? Now this is the foundation of all Christian self-denial; we are born and bred in slavery to sin and corrupt tempers, and are only to be saved by putting off this old man, and being renewed in holiness and purity of life. The denials therefore of religion are only the necessary means of salvation, as they are necessary to lessen the corruption of our nature, destroy our old habits, alter the taste and temper of our minds, and prepare us to relish and aspire after holiness and perfection. For since our souls are in a state of corruption, and our life is a state of probation, in order to alter and remove this corruption it is certain that every thing and every way of life which nourishes and increases our corruption is as much to be avoided as those things which beget in us purity and holiness are to be sought after. A man that wants his health is as well, and for the same reasons, to avoid such things as nourish his illness as he is to take medicines that have a healing quality. Self-denial is therefore as essential to the Christian life as prayer is; it being equally necessary to deny ourselves such things as support our corruption as it is necessary to pray for those things which will do us good and purify our natures. The whole of the matter is this: Christians are called from a state of disorder, sin, and ignorance to a state of holiness and resemblance of the Divine Nature. If therefore there are any things or any ways that corrupt our minds, support our vanity, increase our blindness, or nourish sensuality, all these are as necessarily to be avoided as it is necessary to be holy. If there are any denials or mortifications that purify and enlighten the soul, that lessen the power of bodily passions, that raise us to a heavenly affection, and make us taste and relish

the things that be of God; these are as necessarily to be practised as it is necessary to believe in Jesus Christ. . . .

When we speak of self-denial, we are apt to confine it to eating and drinking; but we ought to consider that, though a strict temperance be necessary in these things, yet these are the easiest and smallest instances of self-denial. Pride, vanity, self-love, covetousness, envy, and other inclinations of the like nature call for a more constant and watchful self-denial than the appetites of hunger and thirst. Till, therefore, we make our self-denial as universal as our corruption, till we deny ourselves all degrees of vanity and folly as earnestly as we deny ourselves all degrees of drunkenness, till we reject all sorts of pride and envy as we abhor all kinds of gluttony, till we are as exact in all degrees of humility as we are exact in all rules of temperance, till we watch and deny all irregular tempers as we avoid all sorts of sensuality, we can no more be said to practise self-denial than he can be said to be just who only denies himself the liberty of stealing. And till we do enter into this course of universal self-denial we shall make no progress in true piety, but our lives will be a ridiculous mixture of I know not what; sober and covetous, proud and devout, temperate and vain, regular in our forms of devotion and irregular in all our passions, circumspect in little modes of behaviour and careless and negligent of tempers the most essential to piety. And thus it will necessarily be with us till we lay the axe to the root of the tree, till we deny and renounce the whole corruption of our nature, and resign ourselves up entirely to the Spirit of God, to think, and speak, and act by the wisdom and purity of religion.—[*Christian Perfection*, pp. 193, 228.]

THE AXE AT THE ROOT

LOOK at our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount, and, indeed, at all His instructions, and you will find them pointing at nothing else on our side but a denial of ourselves and a renunciation of the world. And, indeed, how could it be otherwise? For

if we are ourselves something which we were not created to be, and if this is our misery, that we have raised and awakened a nature and life in us which is not our first that we had from God, must not the first step towards our salvation be a denying and departing with our whole will and inclination from that which we have made ourselves to be, from that life which we have awakened in us? If self is our misery and captivity, must not our deliverance require a total, continual self-denial? If we want a Redeemer only because we have wandered out of paradise and could not get back to it ourselves, if we are overcome by this world only because the will and desire of our first father sought after it, what wonder is it that He Who is to replace us in paradise should call us to a renunciation of the world? If this world has got its dominion over us merely because the will and desire of man turned itself towards the earth, how can its dominion over us be destroyed but by our turning our whole will and desire towards heaven? Vain man, taken with the sound of heavenly things and prospects of future glory, yet at the same time a fast friend to all the interests and passions of flesh and blood, would fain compound matters between God and mammon. He is very willing to acknowledge a Saviour that died on the cross to save him, he is ready to receive outward ordinances and forms of Divine worship, and to contend with zeal for the observance of them. He likes heaven and future glory on these conditions. He is also ready to put on an outward morality of behaviour, to let religion polish his manners, that he may have the credit and ornament of a prudential piety, well-ordered passions, and a decency of outward life; this gives no hurt, or at least no death's-blow to the old man. But to lay the axe to the whole root of our disease; to cut all those silken cords asunder which tie us to the world, and the world to us; to deny every temper and passion that cannot be made holy, wise, and heavenly; to die to every gratification which keeps up and strengthens the folly, vanity, pride, and blindness of our fallen

nature; to leave no little morsels of sensuality, avarice, and ambition for the old man to feed upon, however well covered under his mantle; this, though it be the very essence of religion on our part, is what he flies from with as much aversion as from heresy and schism. Here he makes learned appeals to reason and common sense to judge betwixt him and the gospel, which is just as wise as to ask the learned Greek and the worldly Jew whether the cross of Christ be not foolishness and a just rock of offence, or to appeal to flesh and blood about the narrow way to that kingdom of heaven into which itself cannot possibly have any entrance.—[*An Earnest and Serious Answer to Dr. Trapp's Discourse, etc.*, p. 38.]

LIFE BY THE CROSS

AND now, sir, you see also the absolute necessity of the gospel-doctrine of the cross, viz., of dying to self as the one only way to life in God. This cross, or dying to self, is the one morality that does man any good. Fancy as many rules as you will of modelling the moral behaviour of man, they all do nothing, because they leave nature still alive, and therefore can only help a man to a feigned hypocritical art of concealing his own inward evil, and seeming to be not under its power. And the reason why it must be so is plain: it is because nature is not possible to be reformed; it is immutable in its workings, and must be always as it is, and never any better or worse than its own untaught workings are. It can no more change from evil to good than darkness can work itself into light. The one work, therefore, of morality is the one doctrine of the cross, viz., to resist and deny nature, that a supernatural power or divine goodness may take possession of it and bring a new light into it.—[*Spirit of Love*, p. 62.]

A CAUTION

HENCE we may also learn the true nature and worth of all self-denials and mortifications. As to their nature, considered in themselves, they have nothing of goodness or holiness,

nor are any real parts of our sanctification, they are not the true food or nourishment of the Divine life in our souls, they have no quickening, sanctifying power in them; their only worth consists in this, that they remove the impediments of holiness, break down that which stands between God and us, and make way for the quickening, sanctifying Spirit of God to operate on our souls: which operation of God is the one only thing that can raise the Divine life in the soul, or help it to the smallest degree of real holiness, or spiritual life. As in our creation we had only that degree of a Divine life which the power of God derived into us, as then all that we had and were was the sole operation of God in the creation of us, so in our redemption, or regaining that first perfection which we have lost, all must be again the operation of God; every degree of the Divine life restored in us, be it ever so small, must and can be nothing else but so much of the life and operation of God found again in the soul. All the activity of man in the works of self-denial has no good in itself, but is only to open an entrance for the One Only Good, the Light of God, to operate upon us. Hence also, we may learn the reason why many people not only lose the benefit, but are even the worse for all their mortifications. It is because they mistake the whole nature and worth of them. They practise them for their own sakes, as things good in themselves; they think them to be real parts of holiness, and so rest in them and look no further, but grow full of self-esteem and self-admiration for their own progress in them. This makes them self-sufficient, morose, severe judges of all those that fall short of their mortifications. And thus their self-denials do only that for them which indulgences do for other people; they withstand and hinder the operation of God upon their souls, and instead of being really self-denials, they strengthen and keep up the kingdom of self.—[*The Spirit of Prayer*, p. 91.]

EARLY RISING

PRAYER IS BETTER THAN SLEEP

I TAKE it for granted that every Christian that is in health is up early in the morning; for it is much more reasonable to suppose a person up early because he is a Christian than because he is a labourer, or a tradesman, or a servant, or has business that wants him. We naturally conceive some abhorrence of a man that is in bed when he should be at his labour, or in his shop. We cannot tell how to think any good thing of him who is such a slave to drowsiness as to neglect his business for it. Let this, therefore, teach us to conceive how odious we must appear in the sight of heaven if we are in bed, shut up in sleep and darkness, when we should be praising God, and are such slaves to drowsiness as to neglect our devotions for it. For, if he is to be blamed as a slothful drone that rather chooses the lazy indulgence of sleep than to perform his proper share of worldly business, how much more is he to be reproached that had rather lie folded up in a bed than be raising up his heart to God in acts of praise and adoration? Prayer is the nearest approach to God, and the highest enjoyment of Him that we are capable of in this life. It is the noblest exercise of the soul, the most exalted use of our best faculties, and the highest imitation of the blessed inhabitants of heaven. When our hearts are full of God, sending up holy desires to the throne of grace, we are then in our highest state, we are upon the utmost heights of human greatness; we are not before kings and princes, but in the presence and audience of the Lord of all the world, and can be no higher till death is swallowed up in glory. On the other hand, sleep is the poorest, dullest refreshment of the body,

that is so far from being intended as an enjoyment that we are forced to receive it either in a state of insensibility or in the folly of dreams. Sleep is such a dull, stupid state of existence that even amongst mere animals we despise them most which are most drowsy. He, therefore, that chooses to enlarge the slothful indulgence of sleep rather than be early at his devotions to God, chooses the dullest refreshment of the body before the highest, noblest employment of the soul; he chooses that state which is a reproach to mere animals rather than that exercise which is the glory of angels. . . .

Some people will not scruple to tell you that they indulge themselves in sleep because they have nothing to do, and that if they had either business or pleasure to rise to, they would not lose so much of their time in sleep. But such people must be told that they mistake the matter, that they have a great deal of business to do; they have a hardened heart to change, they have the whole spirit of religion to get. For surely he that thinks devotion to be of less moment than business or pleasure, or that he has nothing to do because nothing but his prayers want him, may be justly said to have the whole spirit of religion to seek.—[*Serious Call*, pp. 229, 234.]

SPIRITUAL BOOKS

SHOW ME YOUR BOOKS

READING, when it is an exercise of the mind upon wise and pious subjects is, next to prayer, the best improvement of our hearts; it enlightens our minds, collects our thoughts, calms and allays our passions, and begets in us wise and pious resolutions; it is a labour that has so many benefits, that does so much good to our minds, that it ought never to be employed amiss; it enters so far into our souls that it cannot have a little effect upon us. We commonly say that a man is known by his companions; but it is certain that a man is much more known by the books that he converses with. Those closet-companions with whom we choose to be alone and in private are never-failing proofs of the state and disposition of our hearts. . . . You perhaps think that it is a dull task to read only religious and moral books, but when you have the spirit of religion, when you can think of God as your only happiness, when you are not afraid of the joys of eternity, you will think it a dull task to read any other books. Do not fancy, therefore, that your heart is right, and that you are well enough affected with religion, though you had rather read books upon other subjects, for it is there that you are to charge your dulness. Religion has no hold on you, the things of eternity are not the concerns of your mind, it is dull and tiresome to you to be wise and pious, and that makes it a dull task to read the books that treat only upon such subjects. When it is the care of your soul to be humble, holy, pious, and heavenly-minded, when you know anything of the guilt and misery of sin, or feel a real desire of salvation, you will find religious books to be the greatest feast and joy of your mind. . . .

If you have every day more time than you can employ in reading, meditation, and prayer, if this hangs upon your hands and cannot be turned to any advantage, let me desire you to go to sleep, or pick straws; for it is much better to do this than to have recourse to corrupt and impertinent books. Time lost in sleep or picking straws is better lost than in such exercises of the mind. Consider further that idle and spare time is a dangerous state, and calls for great care and watchfulness; to have recourse to evil and impertinent books is like inviting the devil because you are alone. If you could read ill books when you were in haste or in a hurry of other matters, it would do you much less harm than to read them because your time hangs upon your hands. So that that season which you take to be an excuse for such reading is a stronger argument against it; because evil thoughts and vain subjects have twice the effect, and make double impressions, when they are admitted at times of leisure and idleness. Consider again to what a miserable unchristian state you are reduced when you are forced to have recourse to foolish books to get rid of your time. Your fortune, perhaps, has removed you from the necessity of labouring for your bread; you have been politely educated in softness; you have no trade or employment to take up your time, and so are left to be devoured by corrupt passions and pleasures. Whilst poor people are at hard labour, whilst your servants are drudging in the meanest offices of life, you, oppressed with idleness and indulgence, are relieving yourself with foolish and impertinent books, feeding and delighting a distorted mind with romantic nonsense and poetic follies. If this be the effect of riches and fortune, only to expose people to the power of disordered passions and give them time to corrupt their hearts with madness and folly, well might our Blessed Lord say, 'Wo unto you that are rich!'—[*Christian Perfection*, pp. 307, 309, 311.]

THEOPHILUS.—Indeed, Academicus, I must own that honest Rusticus, as you called him, has spoke well. Your education has so accustomed you to the pleasure of reading variety of books that you hardly propose any other end in reading than the entertainment of your mind. Thus *The Spirit of Prayer* has only awakened in you a desire to see another part upon the same subject. This fault is very common to others as well as scholars, and even to those who only delight in reading good books. Philo for this twenty years has been collecting and reading all the spiritual books he can hear of. He reads them, as the critics read commentators and lexicons, to be nice and exact in telling you the style, spirit, and intent of this or that spiritual writer, how one is more accurate in this, and the other in that. Philo will ride you forty miles in winter to have a conversation about spiritual books, or to see a collection larger than his own. Philo is amazed at the deadness and insensibility of the Christian world, that they are such strangers to the inward life and spiritual nature of the Christian salvation; he wonders how they can be so zealous for the outward letter and form of ordinances, and so averse to that spiritual life that they all point at as the one thing needful. But Philo never thinks how wonderful it is that a man who knows regeneration to be the whole should yet content himself with the love of books upon the new birth, instead of being born again himself. For all that is changed in Philo is his taste for books. He is no more dead to the world, no more delivered from himself, is as fearful of adversity, as fond of prosperity, as easily provoked and pleased with trifles, as much governed by his own will, tempers, and passions, as unwilling to deny his appetites or enter into war with himself as he was twenty years ago. Yet all is well with Philo; he has no suspicion of himself; he dates the newness of his life and the fulness of his light from the time that he discovered the pearl of eternity in spiritual authors. All this, Academicus is

A COLLECTOR OF

said on your account, that you may not lose the benefit of this spark of the Divine Life that is kindled in your soul, but may conform yourself suitably to so great a gift of God. It demands at present an eagerness of another kind than that of much reading, even upon the most spiritual matters.

ACADEMICUS.—I thank you, Theophilus, for your goodwill towards me, but did not imagine my eagerness after such books to be so great and dangerous a mistake. And if I do not yet entirely give in to what you say, it is because a friend of yours has told us (and as I thought by way of direction) that he has been a diligent reader of all the spiritual authors, from the apostolical Dionysius down to the illuminated Guion and celebrated Fenelon of Cambray: and, therefore, it would never have come into my head to suspect it to be a fault, or dangerous to follow his example.

THEOPHILUS.—I have said nothing, my friend, with a design of hindering your acquaintance with all the truly spiritual writers. I would rather in a right way help you to a true intimacy with them; for they are friends of God intrusted with His secrets, and partakers of the Divine Nature; and he that converses rightly with them has a happiness that can hardly be over-valued. My intention is only to abate, for a time, a spirit of eagerness after much reading, which in your state has more of nature than grace in it, which seeks delight in a variety of new notions, and rather gratifies curiosity than reforms the heart.—[*Spirit of Prayer*, Part II. p. 5.]

SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION

OUR AUTHOR'S DISTASTE FOR

AS to your intention of a visit here I can say nothing to encourage it, and though my countenance would have no forbidding airs put on by myself, yet as old age has given me her own complexion, I might perhaps bear the blame of it.

But my chief objection against a visit of this kind is the reason which you give for it, viz., for my instructive conversation on the spiritual life.

An appointment for religious conversation has a taking sound, and passeth for a sign of great progress in goodness; but with regard to myself such a meeting would rather make me silent than a speaker in it.

First, because I hurt myself, and am only acting a part, if I speak to persons on spiritual matters either sooner or further than as the Spirit of God (which bloweth when and where it listeth) would be resisted in me if I held my tongue.

Secondly, because it is deluding the persons I speak to, and helping them to be content with an imaginary false food, should I, as a spiritual assistant, speak to them of any thing but that which is their own evil and their own good; for true edification arises only from such knowledge, and not from devout harangues on the spiritual life in general, though set forth in the most enlivened words.

The spiritual life is nothing else but the working of the Spirit of God within us, and therefore our own silence must be a great part of our preparation for it, and much speaking or delight in it will be often no small hindrance of that good which we can only

have from hearing what the Spirit and voice of God speaketh within us.

This is not enough known by religious persons; they rejoice in kindling a fire of their own, and delight too much in hearing of their own voice, and so lose that inward unction from above which can alone new create their hearts.

To speak with the tongues of men or angels on religious matters is a much less thing than to know how to stay the mind upon God, and abide with Him in the closet of our hearts, observing, loving, adoring, and obeying His holy power within us.

Rhetoric and fine language about the things of the Spirit is a vainer babble than in other matters; and he that thinks to grow in true goodness by hearing or speaking flaming words or striking expressions, as is now much the way of the world, may have a great deal of talk, but will have but little of his conversation in heaven.

I have wrote very largely on the spiritual life, and he that has read and likes it has of all men the least reason to ask me any questions about, or visit me on that occasion. He understands not my writings, nor the end of them, who does not see that their whole drift is to call all Christians to a God and Christ within them as the only possible life, light, and power of all goodness they can ever have; and, therefore, as much turn my readers from myself as from any other Lo here, or Lo there. I invite all people to the marriage of the Lamb, but no one to myself.—Your humble Servant, W. L.

[*From a Letter to J. R., Northampton* (1760)].

LEARNING

ACADEMICUS.—I did not expect to find you so great an enemy to learning. ITS PROPER WORTH

THEOPHILUS.—Dear Academicus, be not so uneasy; I am no more an enemy to learning than I am to that art which builds mills to grind our corn, and houses for ourselves to dwell in. I esteem the liberal arts and sciences as the noblest of human things. I desire no man to dislike or renounce his skill in ancient or modern languages, his knowledge of medals, pictures, paintings, history, geography, or chronology; I have no more dislike of these things in themselves than of the art of throwing silk or making lace. But then, all these things are to stand in their proper places, and every one kept within its own sphere. Now, all this circle of science and arts, whether liberal or mechanic, belongs solely to the natural man. They are the work of his natural powers and faculties, and the most wicked, sensual, unjust person, who regards neither God nor man, may yet be one of the ablest proficients in any or all of them. But now Christian redemption is quite of another nature; it has no affinity to any of these arts or sciences. It belongs not to the outward natural man, but is purely for the sake of an inward heavenly nature that was lost, or put to death, in paradise, and buried under the flesh and blood of the earthly, natural man. It breathes a spark of life into this inward, hiddeu, or lost man; by which it feels and finds itself, and rises up in new awakened desires after its lost father and native country. This is Christian redemption: on the one side, it is the

heavenly divine life offering itself again to the inward man that had lost it; on the other side, it is the hope, the faith, and desire of this inward man hungering and thirsting, stretching after, and calling upon, this divine and heavenly life. Now, whether this awakened new man breathes forth his faith and hope towards this divine life, in Hebrew, Greek, or English sounds, or in no one of them, can be of no significancy. A man that can do it only in one, or in all these languages, is neither further from, nor nearer to, this redeeming life of God. Or, can you think that the heavenly life must more willingly enter into and open itself in a man that has many languages, than in him who knows only one? Or, that a man, who can make High Dutch, Welsh, or Greek grammars, must have a stronger faith, a more lively hope, and a more continual thirst after God, than he who can but poorly spell in his mother tongue? But now, if this is too absurd to be supposed, then, my friend, without the least injury done or the least enmity shown to learning, science, reason, and criticism, you must place them just where I have done: amongst the things and ornaments of this earthly life, and such things as, in their own nature, are as easy to be had and as highly enjoyed by men that despise all goodness as by those who fear God and eschew evil. And therefore, sir, no truths concerning the divine and heavenly life are to be brought for trial before this learned bar, where both jury and judges are born and bred, live and move and have their being in another world, which have no more power of feeling the divine life than an eagle's eyes can look into the kingdom of God. If you, my friend, having read many old Greek and Latin books, should intend to publish Homer, or Cæsar's *Commentaries* with critical notes, I should have nothing to object to your ability; you might be as well qualified by such means for such a work as one man is to make baskets, or another traps to catch flies. But if, because of this skill in old Greek and Latin, you should seem to yourself or others to be well qualified to write notes upon the

spirit and meaning of the words of Christ, I should tell you that your undertaking was quite unnatural, and as impossible to be free from error as when a blind man undertakes to set forth the beauty of different colours. For the doctrines of redemption belong no more to the natural man than the beauty of colours to him that never saw the light. And from this unnatural procedure it is that the Scriptures are as useful to the Socinian or Arian, the Papist or the Protestant, and they can as easily by the light of reason charge one another with absurdities and confute each other's opinions, as two blind men can quarrel and reject each other's notions of red and green. Jesus Christ is the Light of that heavenly man that died in paradise; and, therefore, nothing in man but that awakened seed of life that died in paradise can have the least sensibility or capacity for receiving the redeeming power of Jesus Christ. But light and life have no dependence upon words or phrases; they both can only proceed from a birth, whether it be the light and life of God, or the light and life of this world. How absurd would it be to suppose that a man naturally blind must be taught grammar or logic to fit him for the reception of the light of the sun and the knowledge of colours? Yet not less absurd than to think that skill in Hebrew and Greek words can open the light of God and heaven in the soul. If you now, Academicus, can set this matter in a juster light, I am ready to hear you. . . .

God is a Spirit, in Whom you live and move and have your being; and He stays not till you are a great scholar, but till you turn from evil and love goodness, to manifest His holy presence, power, and life within you. It is the love of goodness that must do all for you; this is the art of arts; and when this is the ruling spirit of your heart, then Father, Son, and Holy Ghost will come unto you, and make their abode with you, and lead you into all truth, though you knew no more of books than I do. So ended Rusticus.—[*The Way to Divine Knowledge*, pp. 95, 106.]

LEARNING WITHOUT PIETY

HENCE we may also perceive why people of learning and great application to books, who seem to have retired from the corruptions of the world to spend their time in their studies, are yet often not devout. The reason is, because devotion is founded in great humility, and a full sense of the vanity and littleness of everything but God; whereas it is often the same vanity that wears out some scholars in their studies that wears out other people at court, in the camp, or at sea. They do not want to be merchants, or colonels, or secretaries of state, but they want to be critics, grammarians, and historians. They, it may be, disregard riches and equipage, despise the sports and diversions of the present age, avoid the folly of conversation; but then it is to contemplate the riches and equipage, the sports and diversions of the ancient Romans. The vanity of some ladies and gentlemen would be touched if you should tell them that they did not understand dress; some great scholars would be more dejected if you should suppose them ignorant of a fold in the Roman garments. The bulk of mankind are so dull and tasteless, so illiterate, as to set their hearts upon current coin, large fields, and flocks and herds of cattle. Great learning has raised some men above this grossness of taste; their heart only beats at the sight of a medal and ancient coins, they are only afraid of dying before they have outdone the world in their collections of shells, skins, stones, animals, flies, and insects. You would not expect that a merchant should be devout because he traded in all parts of Europe, or that a lady should be pious because she understands all sorts of fine work and embroidery. Now, if you was to look into the business of many profound scholars, if you was to consider the nature of such learning as makes the greatest figure in the world, you will find no more tendency in it to piety and devotion than there is in merchandise or embroidery. When men retire into their studies to change their nature, to correct and reform their passions, to find out the folly, the falseness, the corruption, and weakness of

their hearts, to penetrate into the vanity and emptiness of all worldly attainments, when they read and meditate to fill their souls with religious wisdom and heavenly affections, and to raise their hearts unto God; when this is learning (and what else deserves the name?), then learning will lead men unto God, learned men will be very devout, and great scholars will be great saints. . . .

LEARNING WITHOUT WISDOM

But it may be you are not devoted to these things, you have a greater soul than to be taken with riches, equipage, or the pageantry of state, you are deeply engaged in learning and sciences. You are, it may be, squaring the circle, or settling the distances of the stars, or busy in the study of exotic plants. You, it may be, are comparing the ancient languages, have made deep discoveries in the change of letters, and perhaps know how to write an inscription in as obscure characters as if you had lived above two thousand years ago. Or, perhaps, you are meditating upon the heathen theology, collecting the history of their gods and goddesses; or you are scanning some ancient Greek or Roman poet, and making an exact collection of their scattered remains, scraps of sentences, and broken words. You are not exposing your life in the field like a mad Alexander or Cæsar, but you are again and again fighting over all their battles in your study, you are collecting the names of their generals, the number of their troops, the manner of their arms, and can give the world a more exact account of the times, places, and circumstances of their battles than has yet been seen. You will perhaps ask whether this be not a very commendable inquiry? An excellent use of our time and parts? Whether people may not be very reasonably exhorted to these kind of studies? It may be answered, that all inquiries (however learned they are reckoned) which do not improve the mind in some useful knowledge, that do not make us wise in religious wisdom, are to be reckoned amongst our greatest vanities and follies. All speculations that will not stand this trial

are to be looked upon as the wanderings and impertinences of a disordered understanding. It is strange want of thought to imagine that an inquiry is ever the better because it is taken up in Greek and Latin. Why is it not as wise and reasonable for a scholar to dwell in the kitchen and converse with cooks, as to go into his study to meditate upon the Roman art of cookery, and learn their variety of sauces? A grave doctor in divinity would perhaps think his time very ill employed, that he was acting below his character, if he was to be an amanuensis to some modern poet. Why then does he think it suitable with the weight of his calling to have been a drudge to some ancient poet, counting his syllables for several years, only to help the world to read what some irreligious, wanton, or Epicurean poet has wrote? It is certainly a much more reasonable employment to be making clothes than to spend one's time in reading or writing volumes upon the Grecian or Roman garments. If you can shew me a learning that makes man truly sensible of his duty, that fills the mind with true light, that reforms the heart, that disposes it right towards God, that makes us more reasonable in all our actions, that inspires us with fortitude, humility, devotion, and contempt of the world, that gives us right notions of the greatness of religion, the sanctity of morality, the littleness of everything but God, the vanity of our passions, and the misery and corruption of our nature, I will own myself an advocate for such learning. But to think that time is well employed because it is spent in such speculations as the vulgar cannot reach, or because they are fetched from antiquity, or found in Greek or Latin, is a folly that may be called as great as any in human life.—[*Christian Perfection*, pp. 373, 444.]

TELL me then no more of your new skill in Hebrew words of your Paris editions of all the ancient fathers, your complete collection of the councils, commentators, and church historians, etc. etc. Did Christ mean anything like this, when He said,

'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life'? Did the apostle mean anything like this, when he said, 'No man can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Ghost'? Great, good, and divine teachers, you say, were many of the fathers: I say nothing to it, but that much more great, good, and divine is He Who is always teaching within you, ever standing and knocking at the door of your heart with the words of eternal life. You perhaps may ask, Why do I go on writing books myself if there is but one true and divine Teacher? I answer, Though there is but one Bridegroom that can furnish the blessing of the marriage feast, yet His servants are sent out to invite the guests. This is the unalterable difference between Christ's teaching and the teaching of those who only publish the glad tidings of Him. They are not the Bridegroom, and therefore have not the Bridegroom's voice. They are not the Light, but only sent to bear witness of it. And as the Baptist said, 'He must increase, but I must decrease;' so every faithful teacher saith of his doctrine, It must decrease and end as soon as it has led to the true Teacher.

All that I have wrote for near thirty years has been only to shew that we have no master but Christ, nor can have any living divine knowledge but from His holy nature born and revealed in us.—[*Letter* vi., *To a Clergyman in the North of England, March 5, 1753.*]

LEARN OF ME

IT may perhaps be here said: Must there then be no learning or scholarship, no recondite erudition in the Christian church? Must there be nothing thought of or got by the gospel but mere salvation? Must its ministers know nothing, teach nothing, but such salvation-doctrines as Christ and His apostles taught, nothing but the full denial of self, poverty of spirit, meekness and humility, and unwearied patience, a never ceasing love, an absolute renunciation of the pomps and vanities of the world, a full dependence upon our Heavenly Father, no joy or rejoicing but in

the Holy Ghost, no wisdom but that which God gives, no walking but as Christ walked, no reward or glory for their labours of love but that of being found in Christ, flesh of His flesh, bone of His bones, spirit of His Spirit, and clothed with the wedding-garment when the Bridegroom comes, when the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first? To this the answer is, Happy, thrice happy are they, who are only the thus learned preachers of the gospel, who through all their ministry seek nothing for themselves or others but to be taught of God, hunger after nothing but the Bread of Life that came down from heaven, owning no master but Christ, no teacher but His Holy Spirit; as unable to join with the diggers in pagan pits of learning, as with those that labour for the wind, and give their money for that which is not bread.—[*Address to the Clergy*, p. 129.]

TRUE KNOWLEDGE

ALL true knowledge, either of God or nature, must be born in you. You cannot possibly know anything of God but so far as God is manifested in you, so far as His Light and Holy Spirit is born in you as it is born in Him, and liveth and worketh in you as it liveth and worketh in Him. A distant, absent, separate God is an unknown God. For God can only manifest God as light can only manifest light, and darkness make darkness to be known. KNOW THYSELF

Again, you can have no real knowledge of nature and its inward working power but so far as the workings of nature and the birth of things are working and a birth in yourself. Natural reason may trade in the outside of things, it may measure and make draughts of magnitude, height, and distance of things on the earth and above the earth, it may make many and fine experiments of the powers of every element. But then this is going no further into the ground of nature than when the potter makes curious vessels with his clay and fire.

To count the stars, to observe their places or motions, is just the same height of natural knowledge as when the shepherd counts his sheep and observes their time of breeding. . . .

We are led into mistakes about this matter from the common practice of the world, which calls everything knowledge that the reason, wit, or humour of man prompts him to discourse about, whether it be fiction, conjecture, report, history, criticism, rhetoric, or oratory. All this passes for sterling knowledge; whereas it is only the activity of reason playing with its own

empty notions. From this idea of knowledge it is, that when this rational man turns his thoughts to the study of divinity, he is content with the same knowledge of divine matters as he had in these exercises of his reason, and he proceeds in the same manner as when he studied history and rhetoric. He turns his mind to hearsay, to conjecture, to criticism, and great names, and thinks he is then a member of the true church when he knows it as plainly as he knows the ancient commonwealth of Rome. His knowledge of the being of God stands upon the same bottom, and is made known to him by the same means and methods of proof, as he comes to be assured that once upon a time there was a first man and his name was Adam. His knowledge of the kingdom of heaven is looked upon to be sufficient as soon as he knows it as he knows that there is such a place as Constantinople. When he turns his inquiries into the mysteries of Christian redemption, he looks as much out of himself as when he is searching into the antiquities of Greece, and appeals to the same helps for this knowledge as when he wants to know the inward structure of Solomon's temple, and all its services, etc. . . .

THE KEY OF KNOWLEDGE

Observe the word *self-evident*, for there lies the truth of the matter; for you have no more of the truth of religion than what is self-evident in you. A blind man may be rich in notions and opinions about the nature, power, and good of light, and in this case one blind man may perplex another and unsettle his notions; but when the light manifests itself, and is become self-evident, then he is at once delivered from an uncertainty about it. Now, religion is light and life; but light and life can only manifest themselves, and can nowhere be known but where they are self-evident. You can know nothing of God, of nature, of heaven, or hell, or yourself, but so far as all these things are self-evident in you. Neither could any of these things be of any concern to you, but because they can all of them be self-

evident in you. For the bare history or hearsay of any one thing signifies no more to you than the hearsay of any other thing. And if God and heaven, hell and the devil, the world and the flesh, were not all of them self-evident in you, you could have no more good or hurt from any hearsay about them, than from the hearsay of pleasant gardens and dismal prisons in the world of the moon. Let it be supposed that your ingenious reason should suggest to you that there are no devils or hell, and, therefore, no occasion to believe that revelation that gives an account of them. In this case, do but turn to that which is sensible and self-evident in you, and then you must know, in the same certainty as you know yourself to be alive, that there is wrath, self-torment, envy, malice, evil-will, pride, cruelty, revenge, etc. Now, say, if you please, there are no other devils but these, and that men have no other devils to resist, and then you will have said the truth enough, have owned devils enough, and enough confessed that you are in the midst of them, that you are everywhere tempted by them, and that flesh and blood is too weak to resist them, and therefore wants some kind of saviour of so contrary a nature as has power to destroy these works of the devil in you.

Now, this is the only knowledge that you can possibly have of an outward hell and outward devils, and this knowledge is as self-evident in you as your own thoughts, and is as near to you as your own life. But to see and know an outward hell, or outward devils that are outward living creatures, can never be your own case till all that is divine and human in you is extinguished, and then you will have knowledge enough, how hell is a place, and how the devils of rage, wrath, envy, and pride, etc., are living creatures.

Again, let it be supposed that your sceptic reason had brought you into doubt about the being and providence of God in you, you have no occasion to consult the demonstrations which heathen philosophers, school-divines, deists, or atheists, have produced

about it from the existence of things, all concluding, as well Christians as deists and atheists, that there must be some eternal first cause from which all has proceeded. For what a God is this, that is only proved to be, because something now is, and therefore something must always have been, an infinite, eternal something, with infinite power to bring forth all that is come into being? What a God, I say, is this, which the Arian, the deist, and the atheist, is as willing to own as the Christian, and which is as serviceable to the cause of Arianism, deism, idolatry, and atheism, as it is to Christianity? For the atheist has his omnipotent, eternal, first cause, as well as all the disputers for a God. But now, if you turn from all these idle debates and demonstrations of reason to that which is sensible and self-evident in you, then you have a sensible, self-evident proof of the true God of Life and Light and Love and Goodness, as manifest to you as your own life. For, with the same self-evident certainty as you know that you think and are alive, you know that there is goodness, love, benevolence, meekness, compassion, wisdom, peace, joy. Now, this is the self-evident God that forces Himself to be known and found and felt in every man in the same certainty of self-evidence as every man feels and finds his own thoughts and life. And this is the God Whose being and providence, thus self-evident in us, call for our worship and love and adoration and obedience to Him. And this worship and love and adoration and conformity to the divine goodness is our true belief in and sure knowledge of the self-evident God. And atheism is not the denial of a first omnipotent cause, but is purely and solely nothing else but the disowning, forsaking, and renouncing the goodness, virtue, benevolence, meekness of the Divine Nature that has made itself thus self-evident in us as the true object of our worship, conformity, love, and adoration. This is the One True God, or the Deity of goodness, virtue, and love, etc., the certainty of Whose being and providence opens itself to you in the self-evident sensibility

of your own nature, and inspires His likeness and love of His goodness into you. And as this is the only true knowledge that you can possibly have of God and the Divine Nature, so it is a knowledge not to be debated or lessened by any objections of reason, but is as self-evident as your own life. But to find or know God in reality by any outward proofs, or by anything but by God Himself made manifest and self-evident in you, will never be your case either here or hereafter. For neither God, nor heaven, nor hell, nor the devil, nor the world and the flesh, can be any otherwise knowable in you or by you, but by their own existence and manifestation in you. And all pretended knowledge of any of these things, beyond or without this self-evident sensibility of their birth within you, is only such knowledge of them as the blind man hath of that light that never entered into him. And as this is our only true knowledge, so every man is, by his birth and nature, brought into a certain and self-evident sensibility of all these things. And if we bring ourselves by reasoning and dispute into an uncertainty about them, it is an uncertainty that we have created for ourselves, and comes not from God and nature. For God and nature have made that which is our greatest concern to be our greatest certainty, and to be known by us in the same self-evidence as our own pain or pleasure is. For nothing is religion, or the truth of religion, nothing is good or bad to you, but that which is a self-evident birth within you. So that if you call that only God and religion and goodness which truly are so, and can only be known by their self-evident powers and life in you, then you are in the truth, and the truth will make you free from all doubts, and you will no more fear or regard anything that talkative reason can discourse against it than against your own seeing, hearing, or sensible life. But if you turn from self-evidence to reason and opinion, you turn from the tree of life, and you give yourself up to certain delusion.—[*The Way to Divine Knowledge*, pp. 122, 124, 189.]

PREACHING

THE PREACHER HIS OWN FIRST FRUITS

THE first business of a clergyman awakened by God into a sensibility and love of the truths of the gospel, and of making them equally felt and loved by others, is thankfully, joyfully, and calmly to adhere to, and give way to, the increase of this new-risen light, and by true introversion of his heart to God, as the sole Author of it, humbly to beg of Him that all that which he feels a desire of doing to those under his care may be first truly and fully done in himself.—[*Letter* iii., *April* 10, 1756.]

LIKE PRIEST LIKE PEOPLE

LIKE begets like; love and seriousness in the speaker beget love and seriousness in the hearer.—[*A Short Confutation, etc.*, p. 153.]

OUT OF THE PULPIT

WHEN a clergyman preaches, he is for the most part considered as doing his duty, as acting according to his profession, and that which all clergymen do, whether good or bad. But if he is the same wise and virtuous man in his communication that he is in the pulpit, if his speech be seasoned with salt that it may minister grace unto the hearers, if the common and ordinary action of his life be visibly governed by a spirit of piety, such a one will make converts to holiness, he will be heard with reverence on the Sunday, not so much for the weight of what he says as for what he says and does all the week. And, on the contrary, if a clergyman, when he comes out of the pulpit, is but like other men, as irregular in his tempers, as trifling in his conversation, as eager in diversions, as ridiculous in his pleasures, and as vain

in his designs as other people, he will mightily lessen his power over the hearts of his hearers.—[*Christian Perfection*, p. 273.]

THE PREACHER CALLED TO ACCOUNT

IF Christianity has not done that to my flock which is the only end and intent of it, is there nothing of this failure chargeable upon my conduct over it? Can my righteous Judge lay nothing grievous to my charge on that account? Can my own heart bear me witness that I did not run in my own will, was not driven by human passions, but stayed and waited till the Holy Spirit called me to this office? Have I not undertaken the care of other souls before I had ever any true and real care of my own? Have I not presumed to convert and strengthen others before I was converted myself? To preach by hearsay of the grace and mercy and salvation of the gospel, whilst I myself was an obedient slave to sin? Have I not taken upon me to explain and lay open the mysteries of God's love in Christ Jesus before they had had their proper entrance into my own soul? Has my own repentance, compunction, deep sensibility of the burden of sin and want of a Saviour, taught me how to make the terrors of the Lord known in the deep of every man's heart and to awaken and pierce the consciences of sinners? Has my own true and living faith in Christ my Saviour, my own experience of the atoning, cleansing, sanctifying power of His precious blood, enabled me with great boldness to tell all sinners that, to the faith which worketh by love, Christ always and infallibly saith what He said in the gospel, 'Thy sins are forgiven, thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace'? Can my own heart, and God, Who is greater than our hearts, bear me witness that in my sacred office I have not sought myself, or my own things, but the things of Jesus Christ? If I have changed one flock or station for another, or added one cure to another, have I done it in singleness of heart, as unto the Lord and not for myself? Has all that I have sought or done of this kind been only from this motive, and in this view, that I might be more truly

faithful to Him that hath called me, and be more and more spent and sacrificed for the salvation of souls? Have I neglected no means of fitting and preparing myself for the illuminations of God's Holy Spirit, which alone can enable me in any measure to speak to, and work upon, the hearts and consciences of men? Have I earnestly longed and laboured after every kind and degree of inward and outward holiness and purity of body, soul, and spirit, that my standing at the altar may be acceptable to God, and my prayers and intercessions for my flock avail much before Him? Has my own self-denial, renunciation of the world, and love of the cross of Christ enabled me to preach up those duties to their full extent? Has my own strictly pious use of the things of this world, my own readiness to relieve and assist every creature to the utmost extent of my ability, fitted me to call others to these things with power and authority? Have all ages and conditions of people under my care had their proper instruction and warning from me, so that I have spared no folly, vanity, indulgence, or conformity to the world that hurts men's souls and hinders their progress in piety? Have I done all that by my prayers and preaching, life and example, which Christ expects from those whom He has enjoined to feed His sheep? Can my flock, by looking at me, see what virtues they want? Can they, by following me, be led to every kind and degree of Christian perfection? Lastly, has the will of God and the spirit of the gospel been the beginning and end, the reason and motive, the rule and measure of my liking or disliking, doing or not doing, everything among those people with whom I have lived as their minister? . . .

TO YOUNG PREACHERS

And here I can't help addressing myself with great affection to all my younger brethren of the clergy. According to the course of nature you are likely to have the care of the church wholly upon your hands in a short time, and, therefore, it is chiefly from you that the restoration of true piety is to be expected in this nation. I beseech you, therefore, for your own sakes, for

the Gospel's sake, for the sake of mankind, to devote yourselves wholly to the love and service of God. As you are yet but beginners in this great office, you have it in your power to make your lives the greatest happiness, both to yourselves and the whole nation. You are entered into holy orders in degenerate times, where trade and traffic have seized upon all holy things, and it will be easy for you, without fear, to swim along with the corrupt stream, and to look upon him as an enemy or enthusiast that would save you from being lost in it. But think, my dear brethren, think in time, what remorse you are treasuring up for yourselves if you live to look back upon a loose, negligent, corrupt, disorderly, worldly, unedifying life spent amongst those whose blood will be required at your hands. Think, on the other hand, how blessedly your employment will end if by your voices, your lives, and labours you put a stop to the overflowings of iniquity, restore the spirit of the primitive clergy, and make all your flock bless and praise God for having sent you amongst them. Lay this down as an infallible principle, that an entire, absolute renunciation of all worldly interest is the only possible foundation of that exalted virtue which your station requires. Without this, all attempts after an exemplary piety are in vain. If you want anything from the world by way of figure and exaltation, you shut the power of your Redeemer out of your own souls; and, instead of converting, you corrupt the hearts of those that are about you. Detest, therefore, with the utmost abhorrence, all desires of making your fortunes, either by preferments or rich marriages, and let it be your only ambition to stand at the top of every virtue as visible guides and patterns to all that aspire after the perfection of holiness. Consider yourselves merely as the messengers of God that are solely sent into the world on His errand, and think it happiness enough that you are called to the same business for which the Son of God was born into the world. I don't call you from a sober use of human learning, but I would fain persuade you

to think nothing worthy of your notice in books and study, but that which directly applies to the amendment of the heart, which makes you more holy, more divine, more heavenly than you would be without it. You want nothing but to have the corruption of your natural birth removed, to have the nature, life, and spirit of Jesus Christ derived into you: as this is all that you want, so let this be all that you seek from books, study, or men. This is the only certain way to become eminent divines, instructed to the kingdom of heaven. And, above all, let me tell you, that the book of all books is your own heart, in which are written and engraven the deepest lessons of divine instruction; learn, therefore, to be deeply attentive to the presence of God in your hearts, Who is always speaking, always instructing, always illuminating that heart that is attentive to Him. Here you will meet the Divine Light in its proper place, in that depth of your souls, where the birth of the Son of God and the proceeding of the Holy Ghost are always ready to spring up in you. And be assured of this, that so much as you have of inward love and adherence to His Holy Light and Spirit within you, so much as you have of real unaffected humility and meekness, so much as you are dead to your own will and self-love, so much as you have of purity of heart, so much, and no more, nor any further, do you see and know the truths of God. These virtues are the only eyes and ears and senses and heart by which you will know and understand everything in Scripture, in that manner and in that degree in which God would have it understood, both for your own good and the good of other people.—[*An Earnest Answer, etc.*, pp. 64, 82.]

CONTROVERSY

MISCHIEF OF

MY Dear L.,—I heartily thank you for your last. Talk no more of obtruding upon me with your letters. Everything that comes from you is welcome. I have no need to write anything to you, for you know all that I have to say. You stand upon the same ground that I do, and you have nothing to do but to be steadfast and unmovable in that light which God has vouchsafed to you. But, my friend, take notice of this, no truths, however solid and well-grounded, help you to any divine life, but so far as they are taught, nourished, and strengthened by an unction from above, and that nothing more dries and extinguishes this heavenly unction than a talkative, reasoning temper that is always catching at every opportunity of hearing or telling some religious matters. You have found enough to prove to you that all must be found in God manifested in the life of your soul, and I must say again, shut your eyes and stop your ears to all religious tales.—My dear Soul, adieu. *February 12th*, 1753.—[*Letter* xvi.]

INJUSTICE AND INJURY OF

I SAY not this (as is too commonly done) in the spirit of accusation, or to raise an odium. No, by no means. I have the utmost aversion to such a procedure. I would no more bring a false charge against the deist than I would bear false witness against an apostle, and I desire to have no other temper, spirit, or behaviour towards them, but such as the loving God with all my heart, and loving them as I love myself, require of me. . . . And thus stands the matter betwixt the deists and myself. If I knew how to do them on the subject more justice, I would gladly do it, having no desire

either for them or myself, but that we may all of us be delivered from every thing that separates us from God, all equal sharers of every blessing that He has for human nature, all united in that spirit of love and goodness for which He created us, and all blessed with that faith and hope to which the God of Love has called us, as the one only, possible, natural, and full means of ever finding ourselves saved and redeemed from all the evils both of time and eternity.—[*Spirit of Love*, p. 141.]

WHAT degree of sense or divinity George Fox was possessed of, I cannot pretend to say, having never read any of his writings; but if he has said any good and divine truths, I should be as well pleased in seeing them in his books as in any of the fathers of the primitive Church. For as the gospel requires me to be as glad to see piety, equity, strict sobriety, and extensive charity in a Jew or a Gentile as in a Christian, as it obliges me to look with pleasure upon their virtues, and be thankful to God that such persons have so much of true and sound Christianity in them, so it cannot be an unchristian spirit to be as glad to see truths in one party of Christians as in another, and to look with pleasure upon any good doctrines that are held by any sect of Christian people, and be thankful to God that they have so much of the genuine saving truths of the gospel among them. For if we have no anger or complaint against those that are divided from us but what proceeds from a Christian fear that what they hold and practise will not be so beneficial to them as our religion will be to us, must we not have the utmost readiness and willingness to find, own, and rejoice in those good doctrines and practices which they still retain and profess? If a poor pilgrim, under a necessity of travelling a dangerous and difficult road by himself, had, through his own perverseness, lost the use of a leg and the sight of one eye, could we be said to have any charitable concern for his perverseness and misfortune unless we were glad to see that he had one good leg

and one good eye still left, and unless we hoped and desired they might bring him at last to his journey's end? Now, let every part of the church which takes itself to be sound and good, and is only angry at every other part because they have lessened the means of their own salvation,—let her but have thus much charity in her anger, and then she will be glad to see, in every perverse division, something like the one good leg and the one good eye of the pilgrim, and which she will hope and wish may do them the same good. Selfishness and partiality are very inhuman and base qualities even in the things of this world, but in the doctrines of religion they are of a baser nature. Now, this is the greatest evil that the division of the church has brought forth; it raises in every communion a selfish, partial orthodoxy, which consists in courageously defending all that it has, and condemning all that it has not. And thus every champion is trained up in defence of their own truth, their own learning, and their own church, and he has the most merit, the most honour, who likes everything, defends everything, among themselves, and leaves nothing uncensured in those that are of a different communion. Now, how can truth and goodness and union and religion be more struck at than by such defenders of it? If you ask why the great Bishop of Meaux wrote so many learned books against all parts of the Reformation, it is because he was born in France, and bred up in the bosom of Mother Church. Had he been born in England, had Oxford or Cambridge been his *Alma Mater*, he might have rivalled our great Bishop Stillingfleet, and would have wrote as many learned folios against the Church of Rome as he has done. And yet I will venture to say, that if each church could produce but one man apiece that had the piety of an apostle and the impartial love of the first Christians in the first Church at Jerusalem, that a Protestant and a Papist of this stamp would not want half a sheet of paper to hold their articles of union, nor be half-an-hour before they were of one religion. If, therefore, it should be said that churches are divided,

estranged, and made unfriendly to one another by a learning, a logic, a history, a criticism in the hands of partiality, it would be saying that which every particular church too much proves to be true. Ask why even the best amongst the Catholics are very shy of owning the validity of the orders of our Church; it is because they are afraid of removing any odium from the Reformation. Ask why no Protestants anywhere touch upon the benefit or necessity of celibacy in those who are separated from worldly business to preach the gospel; it is because that would be seeming to lessen the Romish error of not suffering marriage in her clergy. Ask why even the most worthy and pious among the clergy of the Established Church are afraid to assert the sufficiency of the Divine Light, the necessity of seeking only to the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit; it is because the Quakers, who have broke off from the church, have made this doctrine their corner-stone. If we loved truth as such, if we sought it for its own sake, if we loved our neighbour as ourselves, if we desired nothing by our religion but to be acceptable to God, if we equally desired the salvation of all men, if we were afraid of error only because of its hurtful nature to us and our fellow-churches, then nothing of this spirit could have any place in us.

There is, therefore, a catholic spirit, a communion of saints in the love of God and all goodness, which no one can learn from that which is called orthodoxy in particular churches, but is only to be had by a total dying to all worldly views, by a pure love of God, and by such an unction from above as delivers the mind from all selfishness, and makes it love truth and goodness with an equality of affection in every man, whether he be Christian, Jew, or Gentile. He that would obtain this divine and catholic spirit in this disordered, divided state of things, and live in a divided part of the church without partaking of its division, must have these three truths deeply fixed in his mind: first, that universal love, which gives the whole strength of the

heart to God, and makes us love every man as we love ourselves, is the noblest, the most divine, the Godlike state of the soul, and is the utmost perfection to which the most perfect religion can raise us; and that no religion does any man any good but so far as it brings this perfection of love into him. This truth will shew us that true orthodoxy can nowhere be found but in a pure disinterested love of God and our neighbour. Secondly, that in the present divided state of the church truth itself is torn and divided asunder, and that, therefore, he can be the only true catholic, who has more of truth and less of error than is hedged in by any divided part. This truth will enable us to live in a divided part unhurt by its division, and keep us in a true liberty and fitness to be edified and assisted by all the good that we hear or see in any other part of the church. And thus uniting in heart and spirit with all that is holy and good in all churches, we enter into the true communion of saints and become real members of the Holy Catholic Church, though we are confined to the outward worship of only one particular part of it. It is thus that the angels, as ministering spirits, assist, join, unite, and co-operate with everything that is holy and good in every division of mankind. Thirdly, he must always have in mind this great truth, that it is the glory of the Divine Justice to have no respect of parties or persons, but to stand equally disposed to that which is right and wrong, as well in the Jew as in the Gentile. He, therefore, that would like as God likes, and condemn as God condemns, must have neither the eyes of the Papist nor the Protestant; he must like no truth the less because Ignatius Loyola or John Bunyan were very zealous for it, nor have the less aversion to any error, because Dr. Trapp or George Fox had brought it forth.—[*An Appeal, etc.*, p. 272.]

PROVIDENCE

MY TIMES ARE IN THY HAND

EVERY man is to consider himself as a particular object of God's providence, under the same care and protection of God as if the world had been made for him alone. It is not by chance that any man is born at such a time, of such parents, and in such a place and condition. It is as certain that every soul comes into the body at such a time, and in such circumstances, by the express designment of God, according to some purposes of His Will, and for some particular ends,—this is as certain as that it is by the express designment of God that some beings are angels and others are men. It is as much by the counsel and eternal purpose of God that you should be born in your particular state, and that Isaac should be the son of Abraham, as that Gabriel should be an angel and Isaac a man. The Scriptures assure us that it was by Divine appointment that our Blessed Saviour was born at Bethlehem, and at such a time. Now, although it was owing to the dignity of His person, and the great importance of His birth, that thus much of the Divine counsel was declared to the world concerning the time and manner of it; yet we are as sure, from the same Scriptures, that the time and manner of every man's coming into the world is according to some eternal purposes and direction of Divine Providence, and in such time and place and circumstances as are directed and governed by God for particular ends of His wisdom and goodness. This we are as certain of from plain revelation as we can be of anything. For if we are told that not a sparrow falleth to the ground without our Heavenly Father, can anything more strongly teach us that much greater

beings, such as human souls, come not into the world without the care and direction of our Heavenly Father? If it is said the very hairs of your head are all numbered, is it not to teach us that nothing, not the smallest things imaginable, happen to us by chance? But if the smallest things we can conceive are declared to be under the Divine direction, need we, or can we, be more plainly taught that the greatest things of life, such as the manner of our coming into the world, our parents, the time and other circumstances of our birth and condition, are all according to the eternal purposes, direction, and appointment of Divine Providence? When the disciples put this question to our Blessed Lord concerning the blind man, saying, 'Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' He that was the Eternal Wisdom of God made this answer: 'Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him,'—plainly declaring that the particular circumstances of every man's birth, the body that he receives, and the condition and state of life into which he is born, are appointed by a secret providence, which directs all things to their particular times and seasons and manner of existence, that the wisdom and works of God may be made manifest in them all. As, therefore, it is thus certain that we are what we are, as to birth, time, and condition of entering into the world, since all that is particular in our state is the effect of God's particular providence over us, and intended for some particular ends both of His glory and our own happiness, we are by the greatest obligations of gratitude called upon to conform and resign our will to the Will of God in all these respects; thankfully approving and accepting everything that is particular in our state, praising and glorifying His Name for our birth of such parents, and in such circumstances of state and condition, being fully assured that it was for some reasons of infinite wisdom and goodness that we were so born into such particular states of life. If the man above mentioned was born blind that the works of God might be

manifested in him, had he not great reason to praise God for appointing him in such a particular manner to be the instrument of His glory? And if one person is born here and another there, if one falls amongst riches and another into poverty, if one receives his flesh and blood from these parents, and another from those for as particular ends as the man was born blind, have not all people the greatest reason to bless God and to be thankful for their particular state and condition, because all that is particular in it is as directly intended for the glory of God and their own good as the particular blindness of that man who was so born, that the works of God might be manifested in him? How noble an idea does this give us of the Divine Omniscience presiding over the whole world and governing such a long chain and combination of seeming accidents and chances, to the common and particular advantage of all beings, so that all persons in such a wonderful variety of causes, accidents, and events, should all fall into such particular states as were foreseen and foreordained to their best advantage, and so as to be most serviceable to the wise and glorious ends of God's government of all the world. . . .

MIRACLES

Could we see a miracle from God, how would our thoughts be affected with an holy awe and veneration of His Presence! But if we consider everything as God's doing, either by order or permission, we shall then be affected with common things as they would be who saw a miracle. For as there is nothing to affect you in a miracle, but as it is the action of God and bespeaks His Presence, so when you consider God as acting in all things and all events, then all things will become venerable to you like miracles, and fill you with the same awful sentiments of the Divine Presence. Now, you must not reserve the exercise of this pious temper to any particular times or occasions, or fancy how resigned you will be to God if such or such trials should happen. For this is amusing yourself with the notion or idea of resignation instead of the virtue itself. Do not, therefore, please yourself with think-

ing how piously you would act and submit to God in a plague, a famine or persecution, but be intent upon the perfection of the present day, and be assured that the best way of shewing a true zeal is to make little things the occasions of great piety. Begin, therefore, in the smallest matters and most ordinary occasions, and accustom your mind to the daily exercise of this pious temper in the lowest occurrences of life. And when a contempt, an affront, a little injury, loss, or disappointment, or the smallest events of every day, continually raise your mind to God in proper acts of resignation, then you may justly hope that you shall be numbered amongst those that are resigned and thankful to God in the greatest trials and afflictions.—[*Serious Call*, pp. 450, 457.]

IMMORTALITY

WE ARE HIS OFFSPRING

AND here you may behold the sure ground of the absolute impossibility of the annihilation of the soul. Its essences never began to be, and, therefore, can never cease to be; they had an eternal reality before they were in or became a distinct soul, and, therefore, they must have the same eternal reality in it. It was the eternal Breath of God before it came into man, and therefore the eternity of God must be inseparable from it. It is no more a property of the Divine Omnipotence to be able to annihilate a soul than to be able to make an eternal truth become a fiction of yesterday. And to think it a lessening of the power of God, to say that He cannot annihilate the soul, is as absurd as to say that it is a lessening of the light of the sun if it cannot destroy or darken its own rays of light. O, dear reader, stay awhile in this important place, and learn to know thyself. All thy senses make thee know and feel that thou standest in the vanity of time. But every motion, stirring, imagination, and thought of thy mind, whether in fancying, fearing, or loving everlasting life, is the same infallible proof that thou standest in the midst of eternity, art an offspring and inhabitant of it, and must be for ever inseparable from it. Ask when the first thought sprung up, find out the birthday of truth, and then thou wilt have found out when the essences of thy soul first began to be. Were not the essences of thy soul as old, as unbeginning, as unchangeable, as everlasting as truth itself, truth would be at the same distance from thee, as absolutely unfit for thee, as utterly unable to have any communion with thee, as to be the food of a worm. The ox could not feed upon the

grass, or receive any delight or nourishment from it, unless grass and the ox had one and the same earthly nature and origin; and thy mind could receive no truth, feel no delight and satisfaction in the certainty, beauty, and harmony of it, unless truth and the mind stood both in the same place, had one and the same unchangeable nature—unbeginning, original. If there will come a time when thought itself shall cease, when all the relations and connections of truth shall be untied, then, but not till then, shall the knot or band of thy soul's life be unloosed. It is a spark of the Deity, and, therefore, has the unbeginning, unending life of God in it. It knows nothing of youth or age, because it is born eternal. It is a life that must burn for ever, either as a flame of light and love in the glory of the Divine Majesty, or as a miserable firebrand in that God which is a Consuming Fire.—[*An Appeal to all that Doubt*, p. 16.]

HEAVEN AND HELL

MYSELF AM HELL

ASK now what hell is? It is nature destitute of the Light and Spirit of God and full only of its own darkness; nothing else can make it to be hell. Ask what heaven is? It is nature quickened, enlightened, blessed, and glorified by the Light and Spirit of God dwelling in it. . . .

There is hidden also in the depth of thy nature the root or possibility of all the hellish nature, spirit, and tempers of the fallen angels. For heaven and hell have each of them their foundation within us, they come not into us from without, but spring up in us according as our will and heart is turned either to the Light of God or the kingdom of darkness. But when this life, which is in the midst of these two eternities, is at an end, either an angel or a devil will be found to have a birth in us.—[*The Spirit of Prayer*, p. 69; Part II. p. 140.]

THE will is that which hath all power; it unites all that is united in heaven or on earth, it divides and separates all that is divided in nature; it makes heaven, and it makes hell; for there is no hell but where the will of the creature is turned from God, nor any heaven but where the will of the creature worketh with God.—[*The Way to Divine Knowledge*, p. 156.]

I KNOW of no hell, either here or hereafter, but the power and working of wrath, nor any heaven but where the God of Love is all in all, and the working Life of all.—[*The Spirit of Love*, p. 9.]

ONE word more, and I have done. Think with yourself what a happiness it is that you have it in your power to secure a share in the glories of heaven and make yourself one of those blessed beings that are to live with God for ever. Reflect upon the glories of bright angels that shine about the throne of heaven; think upon that fulness of joy which is the state of Christ at the right hand of God, and remember that it is this same state of glory and joy that lies open for you. You are less, it may be, in worldly distinctions than many others; but as to your relation to God, you have no superior upon earth. Let your condition be what it will, let your life be ever so mean, you may make the end of it the beginning of eternal glory. Be often, therefore, in these reflections, that they may fill you with a wise ambition of all that glory which God in Christ hath called you to. For it is impossible to understand and feel anything of this without feeling your heart affected with strong desires after it. The hopes and expectations of so much greatness and glory must needs awake you into earnest desires and longings after it. There are many things in human life which it would be in vain for you to aspire after; but the happiness of the next, which is the sum of all happiness, is secure and safe to you against all accidents. Here no chances or misfortunes can prevent your success, neither the treachery of friends nor the malice of enemies can disappoint you, it is only your own false heart that can rob you of this happiness. Be but your own true friend, and then you have nothing to fear from your enemies. Do but you sincerely labour in the Lord, and then neither height nor depth, neither life nor death, neither men nor devils, can make your labour in vain.—[*Christian Perfection,* p. 470.]

SURSUM CORDA

JACOB BEHMEN

TEUTONICUS

MY Lord, I am conscious that in my later writings I have raised a prejudice against me by espousing the writings of Jacob Behmen. It was very easy for the world to find fault with me on that account. Matter of censure lies very open to the critical reader of his books, though the true ground of every doctrine and article of Christian faith and practice is there opened in such a ravishing, amazing depth, and clearness of truth and conviction, as had never been seen or thought of in any age of the Church. To regard him as a divinely-inspired writer will with many be proof enough of my being an enthusiast. But I am fully assured that if the most sober and just enemy to enthusiasm had but patience to read him till he in some degree understood his ground and principles, be he who he will, Christian or deist, he will find himself forced to think of him as I do, and that without adding either him to the number of the apostles, or his writings to the sacred canon.—[*Letter* i., *To Dr. Sherlock,* p. 2; *June* 30, 1757.]

ALL that I have wrote for near thirty years has been only to shew that we have no master but Christ, nor can have any living Divine knowledge but from His Holy Nature born and revealed in us. Not a word in favour of Jacob Behmen, but because, above every writer in the world, he has made all that is found in the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of nature to be one continual demonstration that, dying to self, to be born again of Christ, is the one only possible salvation of the sons of fallen Adam.—[*Letter* vi., *To a Clergyman,* p. 92; *March* 5, 1753.]

WILL it do you any good to tell you that thus says my heart, without speaking a word, 'Let nothing live in me but the redeeming power of thy Holy Jesus, nothing pray in me but the Holy Spirit?' This is my ship in which I would be always at sea. All that I seek or mean either for myself or others, by every height and depth of Divine knowledge given us by God in His illuminated Behmen, is only for this end, that we may be more willing and glad to become such little children as our Lord has told us are the only heirs of the kingdom of God.—[*Letter* xix., *To T. L.*, p. 179.]

DEAR Sir,—Mr. W. will convey Rusbrochius[1] to you. Every one has his proper way from God, if he is so happy as to find and follow it, without seeking out one of his own. My mind has for many years turned from, or rather passed by, every religious matter that requires critical abilities, or that carries me to any help but that which is to be found within me. I never could go through even the divine Rusbrochius in his spiritualising the Mosaic tabernacle and all that belonged to it. His illuminated eye saw Christ figured and typified in every part, and what he saw he told the world. But as to myself, I cannot go back to search for the shadow of the mystery under its types and figures, because the substance itself is come; and I find more enjoyment of it by simply giving myself up to that which is to be had from a Christ, not as known under Jewish prophecies, but as come in the flesh, and made man in every one who receives Him. Next to the Scriptures my only book is the illuminated Behmen; and him I only follow so far as he helps to open in me that which God had opened in him concerning the death and the life of the fallen and redeemed man. The whole kingdom of grace and nature

[1] [John Ruysbroek, 'theodidactus, solidus, profundus, mysticus primarius,' born at Ruysbroek, near Brussels, about 1293, died at Groenendael, near Waterloo, in 1381.]

was opened in him; and the whole kingdom of grace and nature lies hid in myself. And, therefore, in reading of him I am always at home and kept close to the kingdom of God that is within me.

Wishing you every blessing of Divine light and direction, I subscribe myself, Your hearty Friend and Servant.—[*Letter* xxvii., *To a Clergyman*, p. 195; *Nov. 3*, 1759.]

ACADEMICUS.—I must take the liberty, gentlemen, of speaking first this afternoon. For, though I have been much pleased with what passed betwixt Humanus and Theophilus in the morning, yet I must own to you all that I was quite disappointed. For I came in full expectation of hearing everything that I wish and want to know concerning Jacob Behmen and his works. For, though I have been reading for more than two years some one or other of his books with the utmost attention, and I everywhere find the greatest truths of the gospel most fundamentally asserted, yet presently I am led into such depths as I know not where I am, and talked to in such new, intricate, and unintelligible language, as seems quite impossible to be comprehended. Sometimes I almost suspect that the author understood not himself. For I think, if I knew any truths, though ever so deep or uncommon, yet, if I understand them plainly myself, I could set them before others in the same plainness that they appeared to me. All my acquaintance have the same complaint that I here make. But some hope, and others say, that if you live to publish any of his books, you will remove most of his strange and unintelligible words and give us notes and explications of such as you do not alter. Surely a kind of commentary upon him would reconcile many to the reading of him, who in the state he is in cannot have patience to puzzle their heads about him.

RUSTICUS.—Oh this impatient scholar! How many troubles do I escape through the want of his learning! How much better does my old neighbour John the shepherd proceed! In winter

evenings, when he comes out of the field, his own eyes being bad, the old woman his wife puts on her spectacles and reads about an hour to him, sometimes out of the Scriptures and sometimes out of Jacob Behmen; for he has had two or three of his books some years. I sat by one evening, when my old dame, reading Jacob, had much ado to get on: John, said I, do you understand all this? Ah, says he, God bless the heart of the dear man, I sometimes understand but little of him, and mayhap Betty does not always read right; but that little which I often do understand does me so much good that I love him where I do not understand him. . . .

THEOPHILUS.—To make, therefore, a right use of his writings, you should for a sufficient time keep solely to that part of them which opens the ground and foundation of the powers that work in grace and nature, till by a self-evident sensibility it is opened in you, and your heart stands in a conformity to it and true working with it. For it is your own heart, as finding the working powers of nature and grace in itself, and simply given up in faith to work with them, that is to be your key and guide to that knowledge you are to have of them, whether it be from the Holy Scripture or the writings of this author. For to this end, he tells you, he has written all; viz., to help man to seek and find himself, what is his birth, his state and place in nature, what he is in body, soul, and spirit, from what worlds all these three parts of him are come, how they came to be as they are at present, what his fall is, and how he must rise out of it. And, therefore, if in order to seek and find this ground in yourself, you was, for some sufficient time to read only to the tenth or twelfth chapter of his *Three Principles*, or to the sixth or eighth chapter of his *Threefold Life*, and proceed no further till this ground had made itself manifest in you, and your heart stood in a strict conformity to it, and working with it, you would then be in a true fitness to read further, and reap the full benefit from any other of his books that should fall into your hands, whether it was *The Way to Christ* or the book

Upon the Incarnation. But, above all things, remember this advice, as of the last moment to you: be no reasoner upon the mystery; seek for no commentaries or rational explications of it, to entertain your reason with; for, as soon as you do this, then, however true and good this mystery may be in itself, it is with regard to you of no better use than that very vain philosophy and science, falsely so called, condemned by the apostle. It will only be the same snare and delusion to you that other learning and philosophy is to other people. For, if there is nothing good or divine in you but the faith and hope and love and desire of your heart turned to God, if nothing can do any good, be any blessing or happiness to this faith and love and desire turned to God, but only God Himself in His Holy Being, and if nothing can communicate God to you but God Himself, and if God cannot communicate Himself to you under a notion, or an idea of reason, but a degree of life, good, and blessing, born or brought to life in your soul, then you see that to give yourself up to reasoning and notional conceptions is to turn from God and wander out of the way of all Divine communication.—[*The Way to Divine Knowledge*, pp. 85, 241.]

JACOB BEHMEN, in his natural capacity and outward condition of life, was as mean and illiterate as any one that our Lord called to be an apostle, but as a chosen servant of God he may be placed among those who had received the highest measures of light, wisdom, and knowledge from above. He was no more a human writer, spoke no more from opinion, conjecture, or reason, in what he published to the world, than St. John did, when he put his Revelation into writing. He has no right to be placed among the inspired penmen of the New Testament; he was no messenger from God of anything new in religion; but the mystery of all that was old and true, both in religion and nature, was opened in him. This is the particularity of his character, by

which he stands fully distinguished from all the prophets, apostles, and extraordinary messengers of God. They were sent with occasional messages, or to make such alterations in the economy of religion as pleased God; but this man came on no particular errand, he had nothing to alter or add, either in the form or doctrine of religion: he had no new truths of religion to propose to the world, but all that lay in religion and nature, as a mystery unsearchable, was in its deepest ground opened in this instrument of God. And all his works are nothing else but a deep manifestation of the grounds and reasons of that which is done, that which is doing, and is to be done, both in the kingdom of nature and the kingdom of grace, from the beginning to the end of time. His works, therefore, though immediately from God, have not at all the nature of the Holy Scriptures, they are not offered to the world as necessary to be received, or as a rule of faith and manners, and, therefore, no one has any right to complain either of the depths of his matter or the peculiarity of his style. They are just as they should be for those that are fit for them, and he that likes them not, or finds himself unqualified for them, has no obligation to read them.—[*An Appeal*, p. 322.]

ISAAC NEWTON

THE illustrious Sir Isaac Newton, when he wrote his *Principia*, and published to the world his great doctrine of attraction, and those laws of nature by which the planets began, and continue to move in their orbits, could have told the world that the true and infallible ground of what he there advanced was to be found in the Teutonic Theosopher, in his *Three First Properties of Eternal Nature*; he could have told them that he had been a diligent reader of that wonderful author, that he had made large extracts out of him. . . . Now, why did not this great man do thus? Must we suppose that he was loth to have it thought that he had been helped by anything that he had read? No: it is an unworthy thought. But Sir Isaac well knew that prejudice and partiality had such power over many people's judgments, that doctrines, though ever so deeply founded in, and proved by, all the appearances of nature, would be suspected by some as dangerous, and condemned by others even as false and wicked, had he made any references to an author that was only called an enthusiast.—[*An Appeal*, p. 314.]

HERE also, that is, in these three properties of the desire, you see the ground and reason of the three great laws of matter and motion lately discovered and so much celebrated, and need no more to be told that the illustrious Sir Isaac ploughed with Behmen's heifer when he brought forth the discovery of them.—[*Spirit of Love*, p. 38.]

CHARACTERS

CHARACTERS IN THE 'CHRISTIAN PERFECTION'

PHILO

THE VIRTUOSO

ALL doctrines of religion are disagreeable to Philo. He avoids them as he avoids party. Now, what is the reason of it? It is not because he is debauched and intemperate, but he is a virtuoso, devoted to polite literature. His soul is extended to all the curiosities in the world, and thinks all time to be lost that is not spent in the search of shells, urns, inscriptions, and broken pieces of pavements. This makes the truths of religion and the concerns of eternity seem small things in his eyes, fit only for the inquiry of narrow, little, and unpolite souls (p. 258).

PATRONUS

LOVES THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

PATRONUS is fond of a clergyman that understands music, painting, statuary, and architecture. He is an enemy to the dissenters, and loves the Church of England because of the stateliness and beauty of its buildings: he never comes to the sacrament, but will go forty miles to see a fine altar-piece. He goes to church when there is a new tune to be heard, but never had any more serious thoughts about salvation than about flying. If you visit him when he is dying, you will hear his dying thoughts upon architecture (p. 258).

EUSEBIUS

GRAMMARIAN AND PARISH MINISTER

EUSEBIUS would read prayers twice every day in his parish, he would be often with the poor and sick, and spend much time in charitable visits, he would be wholly taken up in the cure of souls but that he is busy in studying the old grammarians, and would fain reconcile some differences amongst them before he dies (p. 258).

MATRONA

AT FIFTY

MATRONA is old, and has been this fifty years eating and drinking, sleeping and waking, dressing and undressing, paying and receiving visits. She has no profaneness, and, if she has no piety, it is owing to this, that she never had a spare half-hour in all her life to think about it. She envies her daughters, because they will dress and visit when she is dead (p. 259).

PUBLIUS

POLITICIAN

PUBLIUS goes to church sometimes, and reads the Scripture; but he knows not what he reads or prays, his head is so full of politics. He is so angry at kings and ministers of state that he has no time nor disposition to call himself to account. He has the history of all parliaments, elections, prosecutions, and impeachments, and dies with little or no religion, through a constant fear of popery (p. 259).

JULIA

NOVEL-READING WIDOW

JULIA has buried her husband and married her daughters; since that she spends her time in reading. She is always reading foolish and unedifying books. She tells you every time

she sees you that she is almost at the end of the silliest book that ever she read in her life, that the best of it is, it is very long, and serves to dispose of a good deal of her time. She tells you that all romances are sad stuff, yet is very impatient till she can get all that she can hear of. Histories of intrigue and scandal are the books that Julia thinks are always too short. If Julia was to drink drams in private, and had no enjoyment of herself without them, she would not tell you this, because she knows it would be plainly telling you that she was a poor, disordered sot. See here, therefore, the weakness of Julia. She would not be thought to be a reprobate, yet she lets you know that she lives upon folly and scandal and impertinence in her closet, that she cannot be in private without them, that they are the only support of her dull hours, and yet she does not perceive that this is as plainly telling you that she is in a miserable, disordered, reprobate state of mind (p. 308).

JUNIUS

THE ORTHODOX, AND HIS DISTASTE FOR DEVOTIONAL BOOKS

JUNIUS has been orthodox in his faith, a lover of churchmen, a hater of heretics these several years. He is the first that is sorry for a dangerous book that is come out, he is amazed what people would be at by such writings, but thanks God there is learning enough in the world to confute them. He reads all the confutations of atheists, deists, and heretics; there is only one sort of books for which Junius has no taste, and that is books of devotion. He freely owns that they are not for his taste, he does not understand their flights. If another person was to say so much, it would be imputed to his want of piety; but because Junius is known to be an enemy to irreligion, because he is constantly at church, you suppose him to be a pious man, though he thus confesses that he wants the spirit of piety. It is in the same manner that Junius deceives himself; his heart permits him to neglect books of devotion, because his heart is constantly shewing him his

zeal for religion and honour for the church; this makes him no more suspect himself to want any degrees of piety than he suspects himself to be a favourer of heresy. If he never thinks any ill of himself, if he never suspects any falseness in his own heart, if he is prejudiced in favour of all his own ways, it is because he is prejudiced in favour of all orthodox men. Junius reads much controversy, yet he does not take it ill that you pretend to inform him in matters of controversy; on the contrary, he never reads books of devotion, yet is angry if you pretend to correct him in matters of that kind. You may suppose him mistaken in something that he is always studying, and he will be thankful to you for setting him right; but if you suppose him mistaken in things that he never applies himself to, if you suppose that anybody knows what humility, heavenly-mindedness, devotion, self-denial, mortification, repentance, charity, or the love of God is, better than he, you provoke his temper, and he will not suffer himself to be informed by you. Great numbers of people are like Junius in this respect, they think they are very religious by listening to instruction upon certain points, by reading certain books, and being ready to receive further light, who yet cannot bear to be instructed in matters where they are most likely to be deceived, and where the deceit is of the utmost danger. They will be thankful for your telling them the particular times in which the Gospels were writ, for explaining the word Euroclydon or Anathema Maranatha; they will be glad of such useful instruction, but if you touch upon such subjects as really concern them in a high degree, such as try the state and way of their lives, these religious people who are so fond of religious truths cannot bear to be thus instructed (p. 350).

JULIUS

JULIUS goes to prayers, he confesses himself to be a miserable sinner, he accuses himself to God with all the aggravations that can be, as having no health in him; yet Julius cannot bear to be informed of any imperfection, or suspected to be wanting in any degree of virtue. Now, can there be a stronger proof that Julius is wanting in the sincerity of his devotions? Is not this a plain sign that his confessions to God are only words of course, an humble civility of speech to his Maker, in which his heart has no share? If a man was to confess that his eyes were bad, his hands weak, his feet feeble, and his body helpless, he would not be angry with those that supposed he was not in perfect strength, or that he might stand in need of some assistance. Yet Julius confesses himself to be in great weakness, corruption, disorder, and infirmity, and yet is angry at any one that does but suppose him defective in any virtue. Is it not the same thing as if he had said 'You must not imagine that I am in earnest in my devotions'? (p. 381).

HIS INSINCERE DEVOTIONS

CLITO

CLITO says he desires no more time for rising, dressing, and saying his prayers than a quarter of an hour. He tells this to his friends, not to shew his want of religion, but that he may be thought to understand devotion. You tell him that our Saviour's parables teach continuance and importunity in prayer, that the apostles exhort to pray without ceasing, to pray always, and that devout persons are recorded in Scripture as praying night and day. Still, Clito is for short prayers. He at last finds a text of Scripture, and appeals to the example of the angels; they only said, 'Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will towards men.' Clito takes this to be an argument for short

HIS EXPEDITION IN HIS PRAYERS

prayer because the angels had done so soon. But Clito must be told that this is no prayer; it is only a joyful proclamation to men. And surely the manner of angels speaking to men can be no rule or measure of the devotion of men speaking to God. The angels had no more to tell the world than this message of joy, but does it therefore follow that sinners are to be as short in their addresses to God? The Scripture tells us sometimes of voices from heaven, but it would be strange to make the things that were then spoken the measure of our prayers when we call upon God. If Clito must have an example from heaven, he might have found one much more proper than this, where it is said that they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

Our Blessed Saviour saith, 'But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray unto thy Father.' Now, here indeed is no mention of the time that prayer is to be continued; but yet this preparation for prayer, of entering into our closet and shutting the door, seems to teach us that it is a work of some time; that we are not hastily to open our door, but to allow ourselves time to continue and to be importunate in our prayers. How long and how often all people ought to pray is not to be stated by any one particular measure. But this we may take as a general rule that relates to all particulars, that every Christian is to pray so often and so long as to shew a perseverance and importunity in prayer, as to shew that he prays without ceasing, that he prays always, and that he cries to God night and day. For these are essential qualifications of prayer, and expressly required in Scripture. One would think it impossible for people to be sparing in their devotions who have read our Saviour's parables, which teach us that the blessings of heaven, the gifts and graces of God's Holy Spirit, are given to such as are importunate in their prayers.

A man that is often in his closet on his knees to God, though

he may for some time perform but a lip-labour, will, if he perseveres, find the very labour of his lips altering the temper of his heart, and that he has learned to pray by praying often. This we find to be true in all parts of life,—that we catch a spirit and temper from such conversation and ways of life as we allow ourselves in. Use is called a second nature, and experience teaches us that whatever we accustom ourselves to will by degrees transform our spirit and temper into a likeness to it (p. 389).

CREDULA

A BUSYBODY

CREDULA was for some time a tender mother, friendly and charitable to her neighbours, and full of good-will towards all people. She is now spiteful, malicious, envious, and delights in nothing but scandal. How came Credula thus changed? Why, she has been for several years spending her time in visiting; she entered into scandal and evil-speaking at first merely for the sake of talk. She has gone on talking till she has talked her very heart and spirit into a taste for nothing else. At first she only detracted from her neighbours and friends because she was visiting, but now she visits for the sake of detraction. Credula is hardened and cruel in evil-speaking for the same reason that butchers are inhuman and cruel, because she has been so long used to murder the reputation of her neighbours. She has killed all her own family over and over, and if she seeks new acquaintance, it is to get fresh matter for scandal. Now, all this change in Credula is purely owing to her indulging a talkative temper. Now, every thing that we use ourselves to enters into our nature in this manner and becomes a part of us before we are aware. It is common to observe that some people tell a story so long till they have forgotten that they invented it. This is not, as is supposed, through a bad memory, but because the things which we make constant and familiar will by degrees steal the approbation of the heart (p. 391).

CLEMENS, FERVIDUS, AND EUGENIA

THEIR IMAGINARY PIETY

CLEMENS has his head full of imaginary piety. He is often proposing to himself what he would do if he had a great estate. He would outdo all charitable men that are gone before him, he would retire from the world, he would have no equipage, he would allow himself only necessaries, that widows and orphans, the sick and distressed, might find relief out of his estate. He tells you that all other ways of spending an estate is folly and madness. Now, Clemens has at present a moderate estate, which he spends upon himself in the same vanities and indulgences as other people do. He might live upon one third of his fortune and make the rest the support of the poor; but he does nothing of all this that is in his power, but pleases himself with what he would do if his power was greater. Come to thy senses, Clemens. Do not talk what thou wouldst do if thou wast an angel, but consider what thou canst do as thou art a man. Make the best use of thy present state, do now as thou thinkest thou wouldst do with a great estate, be sparing, deny thyself, abstain from all vanities, that the poor may be better maintained, and then thou art as charitable as thou canst be in any estate. Remember the poor widow's mite.

Fervidus is a regular man, and exact in the duties of religion; but then the greatness of his zeal to be doing things that he cannot, makes him overlook those little ways of doing good which are every day in his power. Fervidus is only sorry that he is not in holy orders, and that his life is not spent in a business the most desirable of all things in the world. He is often thinking what reformation he would make in the world if he was a priest or a bishop. He would have devoted himself wholly to God and religion, and have had no other care but how to save souls. But do not believe yourself, Fervidus; for if you desired in earnest to be a clergyman, that you might devote yourself entirely to the salvation of others,

why then are you not doing all that you can in the state that you are now in? Would you take extraordinary care of a parish or a diocese, why then are you not as extraordinary in the care of your family? If you think the care of other people's salvation to be the happiest business in the world, why do you neglect the care of those who are fallen into your hands? Why do you shew no concern for the souls of your servants? If they do their business for which you hired them, you never trouble your head about their Christianity. Nay, Fervidus, you are so far from labouring to make those that are about you truly devout and holy that you almost put it out of their power to be so. You hire a coachman to carry you to church, and to sit in the street with your horses whilst you are attending upon divine service. You never ask him how he supplies the loss of divine service, or what means he takes to preserve himself in a state of piety. You imagine that if you was a clergyman you would be ready to lay down your life for your flock, yet you cannot lay aside a little state to promote the salvation of your servants. It is not desired of you, Fervidus, to die a martyr for your brethren; you are only required to go to church on foot, to spare some state and attendance, to bear sometimes with a little rain and dirt rather than keep those souls, which are as dear to God and Christ as yours is, from their full share in the common worship of Christians. Do but deny yourself such small matters as these, let us but see that you can take the least trouble to make all your servants and dependants true servants of God, and then you shall be allowed to imagine what good you would have done had you been devoted to the altar.

Eugenia is a good young woman, full of pious dispositions; she is intending if ever she has a family to be the best mistress of it that ever was, her house shall be a school of religion, and her children and servants shall be brought up in the strictest practice of piety; she will spend her time and live in a very different manner from the rest of the world. It may be so, Eugenia; the

piety of your mind makes me think that you intend all this with sincerity. But you are not yet at the head of a family, and perhaps never may be. But, Eugenia, you have now one maid, and you do not know what religion she is of. She dresses you for the church, you ask her for what you want, and then leave her to have as little Christianity as she pleases. You turn her away, you hire another, she comes, and goes no more instructed or edified in religion by living with you than if she had lived with any body else. And all this comes to pass because your mind is taken up with greater things, and you reserve yourself to make a whole family religious, if ever you come to be head of it. You need not stay, Eugenia, to be so extraordinary a person; the opportunity is now in your hands, you may now spend your time and live in as different a manner from the rest of the world as ever you can in any other state. Your maid is your family at present, she is under your care; be now that religious governess that you intend to be, teach her the Catechism, hear her read, exhort her to pray, take her with you to church, persuade her to love the divine service as you love it, edify her with your conversation, fill her with your own notions of piety, and spare no pains to make her as holy and devout as yourself. When you do thus much good in your present state, then are you that extraordinary person that you intend to be; and till you thus live up to your present state, there is but little hopes that the altering of your state will alter your way of life (p. 416).

Other Characters—

JUSTUS, TITIUS, LYCIA, SICCUS, SILVIUS, CRITO, TREBONIUS, EUTROPIUS, URBANUS.

CHARACTERS IN THE 'SERIOUS CALL'

PENITENS

A NOTABLE TRADESMAN, ON HIS DEATHBED

PENITENS was a busy, notable tradesman, and very prosperous in his dealings, but died in the thirty-fifth year of his age.

A little before his death, when the doctors had given him over, some of his neighbours came one evening to see him, at which time he spake thus to them: I see, says he, my friends, the tender concern you have for me, by the grief that appears in your countenances, and I know the thoughts that you have now about me. You think how melancholy a case it is to see so young a man, and in such flourishing business, delivered up to death. And, perhaps, had I visited any of you in my condition, I should have had the same thoughts of you. But now, my friends, my thoughts are no more like your thoughts than my condition is like yours. It is no trouble to me to think that I am to die young, or before I have raised an estate. These things are now sunk into such mere nothings that I have no name little enough to call them by. For if in a few days or hours I am to leave this carcass to be buried in the earth, and to find myself either for ever happy in the favour of God, or eternally separated from all light and peace, can any words sufficiently express the littleness of everything else? Is there any dream like the dream of life, which amuses us with the neglect and disregard of these

things? Is there any folly like the folly of our manly state, which is too wise and busy to be at leisure for these reflections? When we consider death as a misery, we only think of it as a miserable separation from the enjoyments of this life. We seldom mourn over an old man that dies rich, but we lament the young that are taken away in the progress of their fortune. You yourselves look upon me with pity, not that I am going unprepared to meet the Judge of quick and dead, but that I am to leave a prosperous trade in the flower of my life. This is the wisdom of our manly thoughts. And yet what folly of the silliest children is so great as this? For what is there miserable or dreadful in death but the consequences of it? When a man is dead, what does anything signify to him but the state he is then in?

Our poor friend Lepidus died, you know, as he was dressing himself for a feast; do you think it is now part of his trouble that he did not live till that entertainment was over? Feast, and business, and pleasures, and enjoyments, seem great things to us whilst we think of nothing else; but as soon as we add death to them they all sink into an equal littleness, and the soul that is separated from the body no more laments the loss of business than the losing of a feast. If I am now going into the joys of God, could there be any reason to grieve that this happened to me before I was forty years of age? Could it be a sad thing to go to heaven before I had made a few more bargains or stood a little longer behind a counter? And if I am to go amongst lost spirits, could there be any reason to be content that this did not happen to me till I was old, and full of riches? If good angels were ready to receive my soul, could it be any grief to me that I was dying upon a poor bed in a garret? And if God has delivered me up to evil spirits, to be dragged by them to places of torments, could it be any comfort to me that they found me upon a bed of state? When you are as near death as I am, you will

know that all the different states of life, whether of youth or age, riches or poverty, greatness or meanness, signify no more to you than whether you die in a poor or stately apartment. The greatness of those things which follow death makes all that goes before it sink into nothing. Now that judgment is the next thing that I look for, and everlasting happiness or misery is come so near me, all the enjoyments and prosperities of life seem as vain and insignificant, and to have no more to do with my happiness than the clothes that I wore before I could speak.

But, my friends, how I am surprised that I have not always had these thoughts; for what is there in the terrors of death, in the vanities of life, or the necessities of piety, but what I might have as easily and fully seen in any part of my life? What a strange thing is it that a little health or the poor business of a shop should keep us so senseless of these great things that are coming so fast upon us! Just as you came into my chamber, I was thinking with myself what numbers of souls there are now in the world in my condition at this very time, surprised with a summons to the other world; some taken from their shops and farms, others from their sports and pleasures, these at suits of law, those at gaming-tables, some on the road, others at their own firesides, and all seized at an hour when they thought nothing of it; frighted at the approach of death, confounded at the vanity of all their labours, designs, and projects, astonished at the folly of their past lives, and not knowing which way to turn their thoughts to find any comfort; their consciences flying in their faces, bringing all their sins to their remembrance, tormenting them with deepest convictions of their own folly, presenting them with the sight of the angry Judge, the worm that never dies, the fire that is never quenched, the gates of hell, the powers of darkness, and the bitter pains of eternal death. O my friends! bless God that you are not of this number, that you have time and strength to employ yourselves in such works of piety as may bring you peace at

the last. And take this along with you, that there is nothing but a life of great piety or a death of great stupidity that can keep off these apprehensions. Had I now a thousand worlds, I would give them all for one year more, that I might present unto God one year of such devotion and good works as I never before so much as intended. You perhaps, when you consider that I have lived free from scandal and debauchery, and in the communion of the church, wonder to see me so full of remorse and self-condemnation at the approach of death. But, alas! what a poor thing is it to have lived only free from murder, theft, and adultery, which is all that I can say of myself. You know, indeed, that I have never been reckoned a sot, but you are at the same time witnesses, and have been frequent companions, of my intemperance, sensuality, and great indulgence. And if I am now going to a judgment where nothing will be rewarded but good works, I may well be concerned that, though I am no sot, yet I have no Christian sobriety to plead for me. It is true, I have lived in the communion of the church, and generally frequented its worship and service on Sundays, when I was neither too idle or not otherwise disposed of by my business and pleasures. But then, my conformity to the public worship has been rather a thing of course than any real intention of doing that which the service of the church supposes; had it not been so, I had been oftener at church, more devout when there, and more fearful of ever neglecting it. But the thing that now surprises me above all wonders is this, that I never had so much as a general intention of living up to the piety of the gospel. This never so much as entered into my head or my heart. I never once in my life considered whether I was living as the laws of religion direct, or whether my way of life was such as would procure me the mercy of God at this hour. And can it be thought that I have kept the gospel terms of salvation without ever so much as intending in any serious and deliberate manner either to

know them or keep them? Can it be thought that I have pleased God with such a life as He requires, though I have lived without ever considering what He requires, or how much I have performed? How easy a thing would salvation be if it could fall into my careless hands, who have never had so much serious thoughts about it as about any one common bargain that I have made? In the business of life I have used prudence and reflection. I have done everything by rules and methods. I have been glad to converse with men of experience and judgment, to find out the reasons why some fail and others succeed in any business. I have taken no step in trade but with great care and caution, considering every advantage or danger that attended it. I have always had my eye upon the main end of business, and have studied all the ways and means of being a gainer by all that I undertook. But what is the reason that I have brought none of these tempers to religion? What is the reason that I, who have so often talked of the necessity of rules and methods and diligence in worldly business, have all this while never once thought of any rules or methods or managements to carry me on in a life of piety? Do you think anything can astonish and confound a dying man like this? What pain do you think a man must feel, when his conscience lays all this folly to his charge, when it shall show him how regular, exact, and wise he has been in small matters that are passed away like a dream, and how stupid and senseless he has lived, without any reflection, without any rules, in things of such eternal moment as no heart can sufficiently conceive them?

Had I only my frailties and imperfections to lament at this time, I should lie here humbly trusting in the mercies of God. But, alas! how can I call a general disregard and a thorough neglect of all religious improvement a frailty or imperfection, when it was as much in my power to have been exact and careful and diligent in a course of piety as in the business of my trade? I could have called in as many helps, have practised as many rules,

and been taught as many certain methods of holy living as of thriving in my shop, had I but so intended and desired it. O my friends! a careless life, unconcerned and unattentive to the duties of religion, is so without all excuse, so unworthy of the mercy of God, such a shame to the sense and reason of our minds, that I can hardly conceive a greater punishment than for a man to be thrown into the state that I am in to reflect upon it.

Penitens was here going on, but had his mouth stopped by a convulsion, which never suffered him to speak any more. He lay convulsed about twelve hours, and then gave up the ghost (p. 37).

CALIDUS

HIS CHIEF END

CALIDUS has traded above thirty years in the greatest city of the kingdom; he has been so many years constantly increasing his trade and his fortune. Every hour of the day is with him an hour of business; and though he eats and drinks very heartily, yet every meal seems to be in a hurry, and he would say grace if he had time. Calidus ends every day at the tavern, but has not leisure to be there till near nine o'clock. He is always forced to drink a good hearty glass to drive thoughts of business out of his head and make his spirits drowsy enough for sleep. He does business all the time that he is rising, and has settled several matters before he can get to his compting-room. His prayers are a short ejaculation or two, which he never misses in stormy, tempestuous weather, because he has always something or other at sea. Calidus will tell you with great pleasure that he has been in this hurry for so many years, and that it must have killed him long ago but that it has been a rule with him to get out of the town every Saturday and make the Sunday a day of quiet and good refreshment in the country. He is now so rich that he would leave off his business and amuse his old age with building and furnishing a fine house in the country, but that he is afraid he

should grow melancholy if he was to quit his business. He will tell you with great gravity that it is a dangerous thing for a man that has been used to get money ever to leave it off. If thoughts of religion happen at any time to steal into his head, Calidus contents himself with thinking that he never was a friend to heretics and infidels, that he has always been civil to the minister of his parish, and very often given something to the charity schools.

Now, this way of life is at such a distance from all the doctrines and discipline of Christianity that no one can live in it through ignorance or frailty. Calidus can no more imagine that he is born again of the Spirit, that he is in Christ a new creature, that he lives here as a stranger and pilgrim, setting his affections upon things above and laying up treasures in heaven,—he can no more imagine this than he can think that he has been all his life an apostle, working miracles and preaching the gospel. It must also be owned that the generality of trading people, especially in great towns, are too much like Calidus. You see them all the week buried in business, unable to think of anything else, and then spending the Sunday in idleness and refreshment, in wandering into the country, in such visits and jovial meetings as make it often the worst day of the week. Now they do not live thus because they cannot support themselves with less care and application to business, but they live thus because they want to grow rich in their trades and to maintain their families in some such figure and degree of finery as a reasonable Christian life has no occasion for. Take away but this temper, and then people of all trades will find themselves at leisure to live every day like Christians, to be careful of every duty of the gospel, to live in a visible course of religion, and be every day strict observers both of private and public prayer. Now, the only way to do this is for people to consider their trade as something that they are obliged to devote to the glory of God, something that they are to do only

in such a manner as that they may make it a duty to Him. Nothing can be right in business that is not under these rules. The apostle commands servants to be obedient to their masters in singleness of heart as unto Christ, not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with goodwill doing service, as unto the Lord, and not to men (p. 55).

SERENA

A LADY OF LEISURE

HAD you, Serena, been obliged by the necessities of life to wash clothes for your maintenance, or to wait upon some mistress that demanded all your labour, it would then be your duty to serve and glorify God by such humility, obedience, and faithfulness as might adorn that state of life. It would then be recommended to your care to improve that one talent to its greatest height, that when the time came that mankind were to be rewarded for their labours by the great Judge of quick and dead, you might be received with a 'Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of the Lord.' But as God has given you five talents, as He has placed you above the necessities of life, as He has left you in the hands of yourself, in the happy liberty of choosing the most exalted ways of virtue, as He has enriched you with many gifts of fortune and left you nothing to do but to make the best use of variety of blessings, to make the most of a short life, to study your own perfection, the honour of God, and the good of your neighbour, so it is now your duty to imitate the greatest servants of God, to inquire how the most eminent saints have lived, to study all the arts and methods of perfection, and to set no bounds to your love and gratitude to the bountiful Author of so many blessings. It is now your duty to turn your five talents into five more, and to consider how your time and leisure and health and fortune may be made so many happy means of purifying your own soul, improving your

fellow-creatures in the ways of virtue, and of carrying you at last to the greatest heights of eternal glory. As you have no mistress to serve, so let your own soul be the object of your daily care and attendance. Be sorry for its impurities, its spots and imperfections, and study all the holy arts of restoring it to its natural and primitive purity. Delight in its service, and beg of God to adorn it with every grace and perfection. Nourish it with good works, give it peace in solitude, get it strength in prayer, make it wise with reading, enlighten it by meditation, make it tender with love, sweeten it with humility, humble it with penance, enliven it with psalms and hymns, and comfort it with frequent reflections upon future glory. Keep it in the presence of God and teach it to imitate those guardian angels which, though they attend on human affairs and the lowest of mankind, yet always behold the face of our Father Which is in heaven.

This, Serena, is your profession. For, as sure as God is one God, so sure it is that He has but one command to all mankind, whether they be bond or free, rich or poor; and that is: to act up to the excellency of that nature which He has given them, to live by reason, to walk in the light of religion, to use everything as wisdom directs, to glorify God in all His gifts, and dedicate every condition of life to His service (p. 69).

FLAVIA

HER TWO HUNDRED A YEAR

FLAVIA and Miranda are two maiden sisters that have each of them two hundred pounds a year. They buried their parents twenty years ago, and have since that time spent their estate as they pleased.

Flavia has been the wonder of all her friends, for her excellent management in making so surprising a figure in so moderate a fortune. Several ladies that have twice her fortune are not able to be always so genteel and so constant at all places of pleasure

and expense. She has everything that is in the fashion, and is in every place where there is any diversion. Flavia is very orthodox, she talks warmly against heretics and schismatics, is generally at church, and often at the sacrament. She once commended a sermon that was against the pride and vanity of dress, and thought it was very just against Lucinda, whom she takes to be a great deal finer than she need to be. If any one asks Flavia to do something in charity, if she likes the person who makes the proposal, or happens to be in a right temper, she will toss him half-a-crown or a crown, and tell him if he knew what a long milliner's bill she had just received he would think it a great deal for her to give. A quarter of a year after this she hears a sermon upon the necessity of charity; she thinks the man preaches well, that it is a very proper subject, that people want much to be put in mind of it; but she applies nothing to herself because she remembers that she gave a crown some time ago, when she could so ill spare it.

As for poor people themselves, she will admit of no complaints from them; she is very positive they are all cheats and liars and will say anything to get relief, and therefore it must be a sin to encourage them in their evil ways. You would think Flavia had the tenderest conscience in the world if you was to see how scrupulous and apprehensive she is of the guilt and danger of giving amiss.

She buys all books of wit and humour, and has made an expensive collection of all our English poets. For, she says, one cannot have a true taste of any of them without being very conversant with them all. She will sometimes read a book of piety,—if it is a short one, if it is much commended for style and language, and she can tell where to borrow it. Flavia is very idle, and yet very fond of fine work. This makes her often sit working in bed until noon, and be told many a long story before she is up; so that I need not tell you that her morning devotions are not always rightly performed.

Flavia would be a miracle of piety if she was but half as careful of her soul as she is of her body. The rising of a pimple in her face, the sting of a gnat, will make her keep her room two or three days, and she thinks they are very rash people that do not take care of things in time. This makes her so over-careful of her health that she never thinks she is well enough, and so over-indulgent that she never can be really well. So that it costs her a great deal in sleeping-draughts and waking-draughts, in spirits for the head, in drops for the nerves, in cordials for the stomach, and in saffron for her tea. If you visit Flavia on the Sunday you will always meet good company, you will know what is doing in the world, you will hear the last lampoon, be told who wrote it, and who is meant by every name that is in it. You will hear what plays were acted that week, which is the finest song in the opera, who was intolerable at the last assembly, and what games are most in fashion. Flavia thinks they are atheists that play at cards on the Sunday, but she will tell you the nicety of all the games, what cards she held, how she played them, and the history of all that happened at play, as soon as she comes from church. If you would know who is rude and ill-natured, who is vain and foppish, who lives too high, and who is in debt; if you would know what is the quarrel at a certain house, or who and who are in love; if you would know how late Belinda comes home at night, what clothes she has bought, how she loves compliments, and what a long story she told at such a place; if you would know how cross Lucius is to his wife, what ill-natured things he says to her when nobody hears him; if you would know how they hate one another in their hearts, though they appear so kind in public, you must visit Flavia on the Sunday. But still she has so great a regard for the holiness of the Sunday that she has turned a poor old widow out of her house, as a profane wretch, for having been found once mending her clothes on a Sunday night.

Thus lives Flavia; and if she lives ten years longer she will

have spent about fifteen hundred and sixty Sundays after this manner. She will have wore about two hundred different suits of clothes. Out of this thirty years of her life, fifteen of them will have been disposed of in bed; and of the remaining fifteen, about fourteen of them will have been consumed in eating, drinking, dressing, visiting, conversation, reading and hearing plays and romances, at operas, assemblies, balls, and diversions. For you may reckon all the time that she is up thus spent, except about an hour and half that is disposed of at church most Sundays in the year. With great management, and under mighty rules of economy, she will have spent sixty hundred pounds upon herself, bating only some shillings, crowns, or half-crowns, that have gone from her in accidental charities.

I shall not take upon me to say that it is impossible for Flavia to be saved; but thus much must be said, that she has no grounds from Scripture to think she is in the way of salvation, for her whole life is in direct opposition to all those tempers and practices which the gospel has made necessary to salvation. If you was to hear her say that she had lived all her life like Anna the prophetess, who departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day, you would look upon her as very extravagant; and yet this would be no greater an extravagance than for her to say that she has been striving to enter in at the strait gate, or making any one doctrine of the gospel a rule of her life. She may as well say that she lived with our Saviour when He was upon earth as that she had lived in imitation of Him, or made it any part of her care to live in such tempers as He required of all those that would be His disciples. She may as truly say that she has every day washed the saints' feet as that she has lived in Christian humility and poverty of spirit, and as reasonably think that she has taught a charity school as that she has lived in works of charity. She has as much reason to think that she has been a sentinel in an army as that she has lived in

watching and self-denial. And it may as fairly be said that she lived by the labour of her hands, as that she had given all diligence to make her calling and election sure.

And here it is to be well observed that the poor, vain turn of mind, the irreligion, the folly, and vanity of this whole life of Flavia, is all owing to the manner of using her estate. It is this that has formed her spirit, that has given life to every idle temper, that has supported every trifling passion, and kept her from all thoughts of a prudent, useful, and devout life. When her parents died she had no thought about her two hundred pounds a year but that she had so much money to do what she would with, to spend upon herself, and purchase the pleasures and gratifications of all her passions. And it is this setting out, this false judgment and indiscreet use of her fortune, that has filled her whole life with the same indiscretion and kept her from thinking of what is right and wise and pious in everything else. If you have seen her delighted in plays and romances, in scandal and backbiting, easily flattered, and soon affronted; if you have seen her devoted to pleasures and diversions, a slave to every passion in its turn, nice in everything that concerned her body or dress, careless of everything that might benefit her soul, always wanting some new entertainment, and ready for every happy invention in show or dress, it was because she had purchased all these tempers with the yearly revenue of her fortune. She might have been humble, serious, devout, a lover of good books, an admirer of prayer and retirement, careful of her time, diligent in good works, full of charity and the love of God, but that the imprudent use of her estate forced all the contrary tempers upon her. And it was no wonder that she should turn her time, her mind, her health, her strength, to the same uses that she turned her fortune. It is owing to her being wrong in so great an article of life that you can see nothing wise, or reasonable, or pious, in any other part of it.

Now, though the irregular trifling spirit of this character belongs, I hope, but to few people, yet many may here learn some instruction from it, and perhaps see something of their own spirit in it. For as Flavia seems to be undone by the unreasonable use of her fortune, so the lowness of most people's virtue, the imperfections of their piety, and the disorders of their passions, are generally owing to their imprudent use and enjoyment of lawful and innocent things (p. 95).

MIRANDA

HER TWO HUNDRED A YEAR

MIRANDA, the sister of Flavia, is a sober, reasonable Christian. As soon as she was mistress of her time and fortune, it was her first thought how she might best fulfil everything that God required of her in the use of them, and how she might make the best and happiest use of this short life. She depends upon the truth of what our Blessed Lord hath said, that there is but one thing needful, and therefore makes her whole life but one continual labour after it. She has but one reason for doing or not doing, for liking or not liking anything, and that is the will of God. She is not so weak as to pretend to add what is called the fine lady to the true Christian. Miranda thinks too well to be taken with the sound of such silly words; she has renounced the world to follow Christ in the exercise of humility, charity, devotion, abstinence, and heavenly affections; and that is Miranda's fine breeding.

Whilst she was under her mother, she was forced to be genteel, to live in ceremony, to sit up late at nights, to be in the folly of every fashion, and always visiting on Sundays; to go patched and loaded with a burden of finery to the Holy Sacrament; to be in every polite conversation; to hear profaneness at the playhouse, and wanton songs and love intrigues at the opera; to dance at public places that fops and rakes might admire the fineness of

her shape and the beauty of her motions. The remembrance of this way of life makes her exceedingly careful to atone for it by a contrary behaviour.

Miranda does not divide her duty between God, her neighbour, and herself; but she considers all as due to God, and so does everything in His name, and for His sake. This makes her consider her fortune as the gift of God, that is to be used as everything is that belongs to God, for the wise and reasonable ends of a Christian and holy life. Her fortune, therefore, is divided betwixt herself and several other poor people, and she has only her part of relief from it. She thinks it the same folly to indulge herself in needless, vain expenses, as to give to other people to spend in the same way. Therefore, as she will not give a poor man money to go to see a puppet-show, neither will she allow herself any to spend in the same manner, thinking it very proper to be as wise herself as she expects poor men should be. 'For is it a folly and a crime in a poor man,' says Miranda, 'to waste what is given him in foolish trifles, whilst he wants meat, drink, and clothes? And is it less folly, or a less crime in me, to spend that money in silly diversions, which might be so much better spent in imitation of the Divine goodness, in works of kindness and charity towards my fellow-creatures and fellow-Christians? If a poor man's own necessities are a reason why he should not waste any of his money idly, surely the necessities of the poor, the excellency of charity, which is received as done to Christ Himself, is a much greater reason why no one should ever waste any of his money? For, if he does so, he does not only do like the poor man, only wastes that which he wants himself, but he wastes that which is wanted for the most noble use, and which Christ Himself is ready to receive at his hands. And if we are angry at a poor man, and look upon him as a wretch, when he throws away that which should buy his own bread; how must we appear in the sight of God, if we make a wanton idle use of that which should buy bread and clothes

for the hungry and naked brethren who are as near and dear to God as we are, and fellow-heirs of the same state of future glory?'

This is the spirit of Miranda, and thus she uses the gifts of God; she is only one of a certain number of poor people that are relieved out of her fortune, and she only differs from them in the blessedness of giving. Excepting her victuals, she never spent ten pounds a year upon herself. If you were to see her you would wonder what poor body it was that was so surprisingly neat and clean. She has but one rule that she observes in her dress, to be always clean, and in the cheapest things. Everything about her resembles the purity of her soul, and she is always clean without, because she is always pure within.

Every morning sees her early at her prayers; she rejoices in the beginning of every day, because it begins all her pious rules of holy living, and brings the fresh pleasure of repeating them. She seems to be as a guardian angel to those that dwell about her, with her watchings and prayers blessing the place where she dwells, and making intercession with God for those that are asleep. Her devotions have had some intervals, and God has heard several of her private prayers, before the light is suffered to enter into her sister's room. Miranda does not know what it is to have a dull half day; the returns of her hours of prayer and her religious exercises come too often to let any considerable part of time lie heavy upon her hands. When you see her at work, you see the same wisdom that governs all her other actions; she is either doing something that is necessary for herself or necessary for others who want to be assisted. There is scarce a poor family in the neighbourhood but wears something or other that has had the labour of her hands. Her wise and pious mind neither wants the amusement, nor can bear with the folly, of idle and impertinent work. She can admit of no such folly as this in the day, because she is to answer for all her actions at night. When there is no wisdom to be observed in the employment of her hands, when

there is no useful or charitable work to be done, Miranda will work no more. At her table she lives strictly by this rule of holy Scripture: 'Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' This makes her begin and end every meal, as she begins and ends every day, with acts of devotion. She eats and drinks only for the sake of living, and with so regular an abstinence that every meal is an exercise of self-denial, and she humbles her body every time that she is forced to feed it. If Miranda was to run a race for her life, she would submit to a diet that was proper for it. But as the race which is set before her is a race of holiness, purity, and heavenly affection which she is to finish in a corrupt, disordered body of earthly passions, so her everyday diet has only this one end,—to make her body fitter for this spiritual race. She does not weigh her meat in a pair of scales, but she weighs it in a much better balance; so much as gives a proper strength to her body, and renders it able and willing to obey the soul, to join in psalms and prayers and lift up eyes and hands towards heaven with greater readiness,—so much is Miranda's meal. So that Miranda will never have her eyes swell with fatness or pant under a heavy load of flesh until she has changed her religion.

The Holy Scriptures, especially of the New Testament, are her daily study; these she reads with a watchful attention, constantly casting an eye upon herself, and trying herself by every doctrine that is there. When she has the New Testament in her hand she supposes herself at the feet of our Saviour and His apostles, and makes everything that she learns of them so many laws of her life. She receives their sacred words with as much attention and reverence as if she saw their persons, and knew that they were just come from heaven on purpose to teach her the way that leads to it.

She thinks that the trying of herself every day by the doctrines of Scripture is the only possible way to be ready for her trial at

the last day. She is sometimes afraid that she lays out too much money in books, because she cannot forbear buying all practical books of any note, especially such as enter into the heart of religion and describe the inward holiness of the Christian life. But of all human writings the lives of pious persons and eminent saints are her greatest delight. In these she searches as for hidden treasures, hoping to find some secret of holy living, some uncommon degree of piety which she may make her own. By this means, Miranda has her head and her heart so stored with all the principles of wisdom and holiness, she is so full of the one main business of life, that she finds it difficult to converse upon any other subject; and if you are in her company when she thinks it proper to talk, you must be made wiser and better whether you will or no.

To relate her charity would be to relate the history of every day for twenty years, for so long has all her fortune been spent that way. She has set up near twenty poor tradesmen that had failed in their business, and saved as many from failing. She has educated several poor children that were picked up in the streets, and put them in a way of an honest employment. As soon as any labourer is confined at home with sickness, she sends him till he recovers twice the value of his wages, that he may have one part to give to his family as usual, and the other to provide things convenient for his sickness.

If a family seems too large to be supported by the labour of those that can work in it she pays their rent, and gives them something yearly towards their clothing. By this means there are many poor families that live in a comfortable manner, and are from year to year blessing her in their prayers.

If there is any poor man or woman that is more than ordinarily wicked or reprobate Miranda has her eyes upon them; she watches their time of need and adversity, and if she can discover that they are in great straits or affliction, she gives them speedy relief. She has this care for this sort of people, because she once saved a

very profligate person from being carried to prison, who immediately became a true penitent.

There is nothing in the character of Miranda more to be admired than this temper. For this tenderness of affection towards the most abandoned sinners is the highest instance of a divine and godlike soul.

Miranda once passed by a house where the man and his wife were cursing and swearing at one another in a most dreadful manner, and three children crying about them. This sight so much affected her compassionate mind that she went the next day and bought the three children, that they might not be ruined by living with such wicked parents. They now live with Miranda, are blessed with her care and prayers and all the good works which she can do for them. They hear her talk, they see her live, they join with her in psalms and prayers. The eldest of them has already converted his parents from their wicked life, and shews a turn of mind so remarkably pious that Miranda intends him for holy orders; that being thus saved himself, he may be zealous in the salvation of souls, and do to other miserable objects as she has done to him.

Miranda is a constant relief to poor people in their misfortunes and accidents. There are sometimes little misfortunes that happen to them, which of themselves they could never be able to overcome. The death of a cow, or a horse, or some little robbery, would keep them in distress all their lives. She does not suffer them to grieve under such accidents as these. She immediately gives them the full value of their loss, and makes use of it as a means of raising their minds towards God.

She has a great tenderness for old people that are grown past their labour. The parish allowance for such people is very seldom a comfortable maintenance. For this reason they are the constant objects of her care; she adds so much to their allowance as somewhat exceeds the wages they got when they were young. This

she does to comfort the infirmities of their age, that, being free from trouble and distress, they may serve God in peace and tranquillity of mind. She has generally a large number of this kind, who, by her charities and exhortations to holiness, spend their last days in great piety and devotion.

Miranda never wants compassion even to common beggars; especially towards those that are old or sick, or full of sores, that want eyes or limbs. She hears their complaints with tenderness, gives them some proof of her kindness, and never rejects them with hard or reproachful language, for fear of adding affliction to her fellow-creatures.

If a poor old traveller tells her that he has neither strength, nor food, nor money left, she never bids him go to the place from whence he came, or tells him that she cannot relieve him because he may be a cheat, or she does not know him, but she relieves him for that reason, because he is a stranger and unknown to her. For it is the most noble part of charity to be kind and tender to those whom we never saw before, and, perhaps, never may see again in this life. I was a stranger, and ye took Me in, saith our Blessed Saviour; but who can perform this duty that will not relieve persons that are unknown to him?

Miranda considers that Lazarus was a common beggar, that he was the care of angels and carried into Abraham's bosom. She considers that our Blessed Saviour and His apostles were kind to beggars; that they spoke comfortably to them, healed their diseases, and restored eyes and limbs to the lame and blind; that Peter said to the beggar that wanted an alms from him, Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. Miranda, therefore, never treats beggars with disregard and aversion, but she imitates the kindness of our Saviour and His apostles towards them; and though she cannot, like them, work miracles for their relief, yet she relieves them with that power that she hath, and

may say with the apostle, Such as I have give I thee, in the name of Jesus Christ.

It may be, says Miranda, that I often give to those that do not deserve it or that will make an ill use of my alms. But what then? Is not this the very method of Divine goodness? Does not God make His sun to rise on the evil and on the good? Is not this the very goodness that is recommended to us in Scripture, that by imitating of it we may be children of our Father Which is in heaven, Who sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust? And shall I withhold a little money or food from my fellow-creature for fear he should not be good enough to receive it of me? Do I beg of God to deal with me, not according to my merit, but according to His own great goodness; and shall I be so absurd as to withhold my charity from a poor brother because he may, perhaps, not deserve it? Shall I use a measure towards him which I pray God never to use towards me?

Besides, where has the Scripture made merit the rule or measure of charity? On the contrary, the Scripture saith, If thy enemy hunger, feed him, if he thirst, give him drink.

Now, this plainly teaches us that the merit of persons is to be no rule of our charity, but that we are to do acts of kindness to those that least of all deserve it. For if I am to love and do good to my worst enemies, if I am to be charitable to them, notwithstanding all their spite and malice, surely merit is no measure of charity. If I am not to withhold my charity from such bad persons, and who are at the same time my enemies, surely I am not to deny alms to poor beggars, whom I neither know to be bad people nor any way my enemies.

You will, perhaps, say that by this means I encourage people to be beggars. But the same thoughtless objection may be made against all kinds of charities, for they may encourage people to depend upon them. The same may be said against forgiving our

enemies, for it may encourage people to do us hurt. The same may be said even against the goodness of God, that by pouring His blessings on the evil and on the good, on the just and on the unjust, evil and unjust men are encouraged in their wicked ways. The same may be said against clothing the naked or giving medicines to the sick, for that may encourage people to neglect themselves and be careless of their health. But when the love of God dwelleth in you, when it has enlarged your heart and filled you with bowels of mercy and compassion, you will make no more such objections as these.

When you are at any time turning away the poor, the old, the sick and helpless traveller, the lame, or the blind, ask yourself this question: Do I sincerely wish these poor creatures may be as happy as Lazarus that was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom? Do I sincerely desire that God would make them fellow-heirs with me in eternal glory? Now, if you search into your soul, you will find that there is none of these motions there, that you are wishing nothing of this. For it is impossible for any one heartily to wish a poor creature so great a happiness, and yet not have a heart to give him a small alms. For this reason, says Miranda, as far as I can, I give to all, because I pray to God to forgive all, and I cannot refuse an alms to those whom I pray God to bless, whom I wish to be partakers of eternal glory, but am glad to shew some degree of love to such as, I hope, will be the objects of the infinite love of God. And if, as our Saviour has assured us, it be more blessed to give than to receive, we ought to look upon those that ask our alms as so many friends and benefactors, that come to do us greater good than they can receive, that come to exalt our virtue, to be witnesses of our charity, to be monuments of our love, to be our advocates with God, to be to us in Christ's stead, to appear for us at the day of judgment, and to help us to a blessedness greater than our alms can bestow on them.

This is the spirit, and this is the life of the devout Miranda; and if she lives ten years longer, she will have spent sixty hundred pounds in charity; for that which she allows herself may fairly be reckoned amongst her alms.

When she dies, she must shine amongst apostles, and saints, and martyrs; she must stand amongst the first servants of God, and be glorious amongst those that have fought the good fight, and finished their course with joy. . . .

Some persons, perhaps, who admire the purity and perfection of this life of Miranda, may say, How can it be proposed as a common example? How can we who are married, or we who are under the direction of our parents, imitate such a life? It is answered, Just as you may imitate the life of our Blessed Saviour and His apostles. The circumstances of our Saviour's life, and the state and condition of His apostles, were more different from yours than that of Miranda's is, and yet their life, the purity and perfection of their behaviour, is the common example that is proposed to all Christians. It is their spirit, therefore, their piety, their love of God, that you are to imitate, and not the particular form of their life. Act under God as they did, direct your common actions to that end which they did, glorify your proper state with such love of God, such charity to your neighbour, such humility and self-denial as they did; and then, though you are only teaching your own children, and St. Paul is converting whole nations, yet you are following his steps and acting after his example. Do not think, therefore, that you cannot or need not be like Miranda because you are not in her state of life; for as the same spirit and temper would have made Miranda a saint, though she had been forced to labour for a maintenance, so, if you will but aspire after her spirit and temper, every form and condition of life will furnish you with sufficient means of employing it. Miranda is what she is because she does everything in the name, and with regard to her duty to God, and when you do the same, you will

be exactly like her, though you are never so different from her in the outward state of your life.

You are married, you say, therefore you have not your time and fortune in your power as she has. It is very true; and therefore you cannot spend so much time, nor so much money, in the manner that she does. But now, Miranda's perfection does not consist in this, that she spends so much time, or so much money in such a manner, but that she is careful to make the best use of all that time, and all that fortune, which God has put into her hands. Do you, therefore, make the best use of all that time and money which is in your disposal, and then you are like Miranda. If she has two hundred pounds a year, and you have only two mites, have you not the more reason to be exceeding exact in the wisest use of them? If she has a great deal of time and you have but a little, ought you not to be the more watchful and circumspect, lest that little should be lost?

You say, if you was to imitate the cleanly plainness and cheapness of her dress, you should offend your husbands. First, be very sure that this is true before you make it an excuse. Secondly, if your husbands do really require you to patch your faces, to expose your breasts naked, and to be fine and expensive in all your apparel, then take these two resolutions: First, to forbear from all this, as soon as your husbands will permit you. Secondly, to use your utmost endeavours to recommend yourselves to their affections by such solid virtues as may correct the vanity of their minds, and teach them to love you for such qualities as will make you amiable in the sight of God and His holy angels (pp. 106, 125).

FULVIUS

HIS CLUB

FULVIUS has had a learned education and taken his degrees in the university; he came from thence that he might be free from any rules of life. He takes no employment upon him,

nor enters into any business, because he thinks that every employment or business calls people to the careful performance and just discharge of its several duties. When he is grave, he will tell you that he did not enter into holy orders because he looks upon it to be a state that requires great holiness of life, and that it does not suit his temper to be so good. He will tell you that he never intends to marry because he cannot oblige himself to that regularity of life and good behaviour which he takes to be the duty of those that are at the head of a family. He refused to be godfather to his nephew because he will have no trust of any kind to answer for. Fulvius thinks that he is conscientious in this conduct, and is therefore content with the most idle, impertinent, and careless life. He has no religion, no devotion, no pretences to piety. He lives by no rules, and thinks all is very well because he is neither a priest, nor a father, nor a guardian, nor has any employment or family to look after.

But, Fulvius, you are a rational creature, and as such are as much obliged to live according to reason and order as a priest is obliged to attend at the altar, or a guardian to be faithful to his trust; if you live contrary to reason, you do not commit a small crime, you do not break a small truth, but you break the law of your nature, you rebel against God Who gave you that nature, and put yourself amongst those whom the God of reason and order will punish as apostates and deserters. Though you have no employment, yet, as you are baptized into the profession of Christ's religion, you are as much obliged to live according to the holiness of the Christian spirit, and perform all the promises made at your baptism, as any man is obliged to be honest and faithful in his calling. If you abuse this great calling you are not false in a small matter, but you abuse the precious blood of Christ, you crucify the Son of God afresh, you neglect the highest instances of Divine goodness, you disgrace the Church of God, you blemish the body of Christ, you abuse the means of grace and the pro-

mises of glory, and it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you (p. 139).

CÆLIA

HER VEXATIONS

CÆLIA is always telling you how provoked she is, what intolerable shocking things happen to her, what monstrous usage she suffers, and what vexations she meets with everywhere. She tells you that her patience is quite wore out, and there is no bearing the behaviour of people. Every assembly that she is at sends her home provoked; something or other has been said or done that no reasonable, well-bred person ought to bear. Poor people that want her charity are sent away with hasty answers, not because she has not a heart to part with any money, but because she is too full of some trouble of her own to attend to the complaints of others. Cælia has no business upon her hands, but to receive the income of a plentiful fortune; but yet by the doleful turn of her mind you would be apt to think that she had neither food nor lodging. If you see her look more pale than ordinary, if her lips tremble when she speaks to you, it is because she is just come from a visit where Lupus took no notice at all of her, but talked all the time to Lucinda, who has not half her fortune. When cross accidents have so disordered her spirits that she is forced to send for the doctor to make her able to eat, she tells him in great anger at Providence that she never was well since she was born, and that she envies every beggar that she sees in health.

This is the disquiet life of Cælia, who has nothing to torment her but her own spirit. If you could inspire her with Christian humility you need do no more to make her as happy as any person in the world. This virtue would make her thankful to God for half so much health as she has had, and help her to enjoy more for the

time to come. This virtue would keep off tremblings of the spirits and loss of appetite, and her blood would need nothing else to sweeten it (p. 169).

FLATUS

FLATUS is rich and in health, yet always uneasy, and always searching after happiness. Every time you visit him you find some new project in his head, he is eager upon it as something that is more worth his while, and will do more for him than anything that is already past. Every new thing so seizes him that if you was to take him from it he would think himself quite undone. His sanguine temper and strong passions promise him so much happiness in everything that he is always cheated, and is satisfied with nothing.

HIS SEARCH AFTER HAPPINESS

At his first setting out in life fine clothes were his delight, his inquiry was only after the best tailors and peruke-makers, and he had no thoughts of excelling in anything but dress. He spared no expense, but carried every nicety to its greatest height. But this happiness not answering his expectations he left off his brocades, put on a plain coat, railed at fops and beaus, and gave himself up to gaming with great eagerness. This new pleasure satisfied him for some time, he envied no other way of life. But, being by the fate of play drawn into a duel, where he narrowly escaped his death, he left off the dice, and sought for happiness no longer amongst the gamesters. The next thing that seized his wandering imagination was the diversions of the town, and for more than a twelvemonth you heard him talk of nothing but ladies, drawing-rooms, birth-nights, plays, balls, and assemblies. But growing sick of these, he had recourse to hard drinking. Here he had many a merry night, and met with stronger joys than any he had felt before. Here he had thoughts of setting up his staff, and looking out no further; but, unluckily falling into a fever, he grew angry at all strong liquors, and took his leave of

the happiness of being drunk. The next attempt after happiness carried him into the field; for two or three years nothing was so happy as hunting, he entered upon it with all his soul, and leaped more hedges and ditches than had ever been known in so short a time. You never saw him but in a green coat, he was the envy of all that blow the horn, and always spoke to his dogs in great propriety of language. If you met him at home in a bad day, you would hear him blow his horn, and be entertained with the surprising accidents of the last noble chase. No sooner had Flatus outdone all the world in the breed and education of his dogs, built new kennels, new stables, and bought a new hunting seat, but he immediately got sight of another happiness, hated the senseless noise and hurry of hunting, gave away the dogs, and was for some time after deep in the pleasures of building.

Now he invents new kinds of dove-cotes, and has such contrivances in his barns and stables as were never seen before. He wonders at the dulness of the old builders, is wholly bent upon the improvement of architecture, and will hardly hang a door in the ordinary way. He tells his friends that he never was so delighted in anything in his life, that he has more happiness amongst his brick and mortar than ever he had at court, and that he is contriving how to have some little matter to do that way as long as he lives.

The next year he leaves his house unfinished, complains to everybody of masons and carpenters, and devotes himself wholly to the happiness of riding about. After this you can never see him but on horseback, and so highly delighted with this new way of life that he would tell you, Give him but his horse and a clean country to ride in, and you might take all the rest to yourself. A variety of new saddles and bridles, and a great change of horses, added much to the pleasure of this new way of life. But, however, having after some time tired both himself and his horses, the happiest thing he could think of next was to go abroad and visit foreign

countries; and there, indeed, happiness exceeded his imagination, and he was only uneasy that he had begun so fine a life no sooner. The next month he returned home, unable to bear any longer the impertinence of foreigners. After this he was a great student for one whole year, he was up early and late at his Italian grammar, that he might have the happiness of understanding the opera whenever he should hear one, and not be like those unreasonable people that are pleased with they know not what.

Flatus is very ill-natured, or otherwise, just as his affairs happen to be when you visit him; if you find him when some project is almost worn out you will find a peevish ill-bred man, but if you had seen him just as he entered upon his riding regimen, or begun to excel in sounding of the horn, you had been saluted with great civility. Flatus is now at a full stand, and is doing what he never did in his life before,—he is reasoning and reflecting with himself. He loses several days in considering which of his cast-off ways of life he should try again. But here a new project comes in to his relief. He is now living upon herbs, and running about the country to get himself into as good wind as any running-footman in the kingdom.

I have been thus circumstantial in so many foolish particulars of this kind of life, because I hope that every particular folly that you here see will naturally turn itself into an argument for the wisdom and happiness of a religious life. If I could lay before you a particular account of all the circumstances of terror and distress that daily attend a life at sea, the more particular I was in the account, the more I should make you feel and rejoice in the happiness of living upon the land. In like manner, the more I enumerate the follies, anxieties, delusions, and restless desires which go through every part of a life devoted to human passions and worldly enjoyments, the more you must be affected with that peace and rest and solid content which religion gives to the souls of men. If you but just cast your eye upon a madman or a fool, it perhaps signifies little or

nothing to you, but if you was to attend them for some days, and observe the lamentable madness and stupidity of all their actions, this would be an affecting sight, and would make you often bless yourself for the enjoyment of your reason and senses. Just so, if you are only told in the gross of the folly and madness of a life devoted to the world it makes little or no impression upon you, but if you are shewn how such people live every day, if you see the continual folly and madness of all their particular actions and designs, this would be an affecting sight, and make you bless God for having given you a greater happiness to aspire after. So that characters of this kind, the more folly and ridicule they have in them, provided that they be but natural, are most useful to correct our minds, and therefore are nowhere more proper than in books of devotion and practical piety. And, as in several cases we best learn the nature of things by looking at that which is contrary to them, so, perhaps, we best apprehend the excellency of wisdom by contemplating the wild extravagances of folly.

I shall, therefore, continue this method a little further, and endeavour to recommend the happiness of piety to you by shewing you in some other instances how miserably and poorly they live who live without it.

But you will perhaps say that the ridiculous, restless life of Flatus is not the common state of those who resign themselves up to live by their own humours, and neglect the strict rules of religion; and that, therefore, it is not so great an argument of the happiness of a religious life as I would make it. I answer that I am afraid it is one of the most general characters in life, and that few people can read it without seeing something in it that belongs to themselves. For where shall we find that wise and happy man who has not been eagerly pursuing different appearances of happiness, sometimes thinking it was here, and sometimes there? And if people were to divide their lives into particular stages, and ask themselves what they were pursuing, or what it

was which they had chiefly in view, when they were twenty years old, what at twenty-five, what at thirty, what at forty, what at fifty, and so on, till they were brought to their last bed; numbers of people would find that they had liked and disliked, and pursued as many different appearances of happiness, as are to be seen in the life of Flatus. And thus it must necessarily be more or less with all those who propose any other happiness than that which arises from a strict and regular piety.

But secondly, let it be granted that the generality of people are not of such restless fickle tempers as Flatus; the difference then is only this, Flatus is continually changing and trying something new, but others are content with some one state: they do not leave gaming and then fall to hunting; but they have so much steadiness in their tempers that some seek after no other happiness but that of heaping up riches; others grow old in the sports of the field, others are content to drink themselves to death, without the least inquiry after any other happiness. Now, is there anything more happy or reasonable in such a life as this than in the life of Flatus? Is it not as great and desirable, as wise and happy, to be constantly changing from one thing to another as to be nothing else but a gatherer of money, a hunter, a gamester, or a drunkard, all your life? Shall religion be looked upon as a burden, as a dull and melancholy state, for calling men from such happiness as this, to live according to the laws of God, to labour after the perfection of their nature, and prepare themselves for an endless state of joy and glory in the presence of God? (p. 189).

FELICIANA

HER GEWGAW HAPPINESS

BUT turn your eyes now another way, and let the trifling joys, the gew-gaw happiness of Feliciana teach you how wise they are, what delusion they escape, whose hearts and hopes are fixed upon an happiness in God.

If you was to live with Feliciana but one half year, you would see all the happiness that she is to have as long as she lives. She has no more to come, but the poor repetition of that which could never have pleased once, but through a littleness of mind and want of thought. She is to be again dressed fine, and keep her visiting day. She is again to change the colour of her clothes, again to have a new head, and again put patches on her face. She is again to see who acts best at the playhouse, and who sings finest at the opera. She is again to make ten visits in a day, and be ten times in a day trying to talk artfully, easily, and politely about nothing. She is to be again delighted with some new fashion, and again angry at the change of some old one. She is to be again at cards and gaming at midnight, and again in bed at noon. She is to be again pleased with hypocritical compliments, and again disturbed at imaginary affronts. She is to be again pleased with her good luck at gaming, and again tormented with the loss of her money. She is again to prepare herself for a birth-night, and again see the town full of good company. She is again to hear the cabals and intrigues of the town, again to have secret intelligence of private amours, and early notice of marriages, quarrels, and partings. If you see her come out of her chariot more briskly than usual, converse with more spirit, and seem fuller of joy than she was last week, it is because there is some surprising new dress or new diversion just come to town.

These are all the substantial and regular parts of Feliciana's happiness; and she never knew a pleasant day in her life but it was owing to some one or more of these things. It is for this happiness that she has always been deaf to the reasonings of religion, that her heart has been too gay and cheerful to consider what is right or wrong in regard to eternity, or to listen to the sound of such dull words as wisdom, piety, and devotion. It is for fear of losing some of this happiness that she dares not meditate on the immortality of her soul, consider her relation to

God, or turn her thoughts towards those joys which make saints and angels infinitely happy in the presence and glory of God. But now let it here be observed that, as poor a round of happiness as this appears, yet most women that avoid the restraints of religion for a gay life must be content with very small parts of it. As they have not Feliciana's fortune and figure in the world, so they must give away the comforts of a pious life for a very small part of her happiness.

And if you look into the world, and observe the lives of those women, whom no arguments can persuade to live wholly unto God, in a wise and pious employment of themselves, you will find most of them to be such as lose all the comforts of religion without gaining the tenth part of Feliciana's happiness. They are such as spend their time and fortunes only in mimicking the pleasures of richer people, and rather look and long after than enjoy those delusions which are only to be purchased by considerable fortunes.

But if a woman of high birth and great fortune, having read the gospel, should rather wish to be an under-servant in some pious family, where wisdom, piety, and great devotion directed all the actions of every day, if she should rather wish this than to live at the top of Feliciana's happiness, I should think her neither mad nor melancholy, but that she judged as rightly of the spirit of the gospel as if she had rather wished to be poor Lazarus at the gate than to be the rich man clothed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day (p. 196).

SUCCUS

WOULD you know what an happiness it is to be governed by the wisdom of religion and to be devoted to the joys and hopes of a pious life, look at the poor condition of Succus, whose greatest happiness is a good night's rest in bed, and a good meal when he is up. When Succus talks of happiness, it is always

HIS GOD

in such expressions as show you that he has only his bed and his dinner in his thoughts. This regard to his meals and repose makes Succus order all the rest of his time with relation to them. He will undertake no business that may hurry his spirits or break in upon his hours of eating and rest. If he reads, it shall only be for half-an-hour, because that is sufficient to amuse the spirits, and he will read something that may make him laugh, as rendering the body fitter for its food and rest. Or, if he has at any time a mind to indulge a grave thought, he always has recourse to a useful treatise upon the ancient cookery. Succus is an enemy to all party matters, having made it an observation that there is as good eating amongst the Whigs as the Tories. He talks coolly and moderately upon all subjects, and is as fearful of falling into a passion as of catching cold, being very positive that they are both equally injurious to the stomach. If ever you see him more hot than ordinary, it is upon some provoking occasion when the dispute about cookery runs very high, or in the defence of some beloved dish which has often made him happy. But he has been so long upon these subjects, is so well acquainted with all that can be said on both sides, and has so often answered all objections, that he generally decides the matter with great gravity.

Succus is very loyal, and as soon as ever he likes any wine he drinks the king's health with all his heart. Nothing could put rebellious thoughts into his head, unless he should live to see a proclamation against eating of pheasants' eggs. All the hours that are not devoted either to repose or nourishment are looked upon by Succus as waste or spare time. For this reason he lodges near a coffee-house and a tavern, that when he rises in the morning he may be near the news, and when he parts at night he may not have far to bed. In the morning you always see him in the same place in the coffee-room, and if he seems more attentively engaged than ordinary, it is because some criminal is broke out of Newgate, or some lady was robbed last night, but they cannot tell

where. When he has learnt all that he can, he goes home to settle the matter with the barber's boy that comes to shave him. The next waste time that lays upon his hands is from dinner to supper, and if melancholy thoughts ever come into his head it is at this time, when he is often left to himself for an hour or more, and that after the greatest pleasure he knows is just over. He is afraid to sleep because he has heard it is not healthful at that time, so that he is forced to refuse so welcome a guest. But here he is soon relieved by a settled method of playing at cards till it is time to think of some little nice matter for supper. After this Succus takes his glass, talks of the excellency of the English constitution, and praises that minister the most who keeps the best table. On a Sunday night you may sometimes hear him condemning the iniquity of the town rakes; and the bitterest thing that he says against them is this, that he verily believes some of them are so abandoned as not to have a regular meal or a sound night's sleep in a week. At eleven Succus bids all good-night and parts in great friendship. He is presently in bed, and sleeps till it is time to go to the coffee-house next morning. If you was to live with Succus for a twelvemonth, this is all that you would see in his life, except a few curses and oaths that he uses as occasion offers.

And now I cannot help making this reflection, that as I believe the most likely means in the world to inspire a person with true piety was to have seen the example of some eminent professor of religion, so the next thing that is likely to fill one with the same zeal is to see the folly, the baseness, and poor satisfactions of a life destitute of religion. As the one excites us to love and admire the wisdom and greatness of religion, so the other may make us fearful of living without it (p. 199).

OCTAVIUS

HIS END

OCTAVIUS is a learned, ingenious man, well versed in most parts of literature, and no stranger to any kingdom in Europe. The other day, being just recovered from a lingering fever, he took upon him to talk thus to his friends: My glass, says he, is almost run out, and your eyes see how many marks of age and death I bear about me. But I plainly feel myself sinking away faster than any standers-by imagine. I fully believe that one year more will conclude my reckoning.

The attention of his friends was much raised by such a declaration, expecting to hear something truly excellent from so learned a man who had but a year longer to live, when Octavius proceeded in this manner: For these reasons, says he, my friends, I have left off all taverns; the wine of those places is not good enough for me in this decay of nature. I must now be nice in what I drink. I cannot pretend to do as I have done, and, therefore, am resolved to furnish my own cellar with a little of the very best, though it cost me ever so much. I must also tell you, my friends, that age forces a man to be wise in many other respects, and makes us change many of our opinions and practices. You know how much I have liked a large acquaintance; I now condemn it as an error. Three or four cheerful, diverting companions is all that I now desire, because I find that in my present infirmities, if I am left alone, or to grave company, I am not so easy to myself. A few days after Octavius had made this declaration to his friends, he relapsed into his former illness, was committed to a nurse, who closed his eyes before his fresh parcel of wine came in.

EUGENIUS

Young Eugenius, who was present at this discourse, went home a new man, with full resolutions of devoting himself wholly unto God. I never, says Eugenius, was so deeply affected with the wisdom and importance of religion as when I saw how poorly

and meanly the learned Octavius was to leave the world through the want of it. How often have I envied his great learning, his skill in languages, his knowledge of antiquity, his address, and fine manner of expressing himself upon all subjects. But when I saw how poorly it all ended, what was to be the last year of such a life, and how foolishly the master of all these accomplishments was then forced to talk, for want of being acquainted with the joys and expectations of piety, I was thoroughly convinced that there was nothing to be envied or desired but a life of true piety, nor anything so poor and comfortless as a death without it (p. 209).

COGNATUS

IN HOLY ORDERS

COGNATUS is a sober, regular clergyman, of good repute in the world and well esteemed in his parish. All his parishioners say he is an honest man and very notable at making a bargain. The farmers listen to him with great attention when he talks of the properest time of selling corn. He has been for twenty years a diligent observer of markets, and has raised a considerable fortune by good management.

Cognatus is very orthodox and full of esteem for our English Liturgy, and if he has not prayers on Wednesdays and Fridays it is because his predecessor had not used the parish to any such custom. As he cannot serve both his livings himself, he makes it matter of conscience to keep a sober curate upon one of them, whom he hires to take care of all the souls in the parish at as cheap a rate as a sober man can be procured.

Cognatus has been very prosperous all his time, but still he has had the uneasiness and vexations that they have who are deep in worldly business. Taxes, losses, crosses, bad mortgages, bad tenants, and the hardness of the times, are frequent subjects of his conversation, and a good or bad season has a great effect upon his spirits. Cognatus has no other end in growing rich but that

he may leave a considerable fortune to a niece, whom he has politely educated in expensive finery by what he has saved out of the tithes of two livings. The neighbours look upon Cognatus as an happy clergyman because they see him (as they call it) in good circumstances, and some of them intend to dedicate their own sons to the church because they see how well it has succeeded with Cognatus, whose father was but an ordinary man.

But now, if Cognatus, when he first entered into holy orders, had perceived how absurd a thing it is to grow rich by the gospel; if he had proposed to himself the example of some primitive father; if he had had the piety of the great St. Austin in his eye, who durst not enrich any of his relations out of the revenue of the church; if, instead of twenty years' care to lay up treasures upon earth, he had distributed the income of every year in the most Christian acts of charity and compassion; if, instead of tempting his niece to be proud, and providing her with such ornaments as the apostle forbids, he had clothed, comforted, and assisted numbers of widows, orphans, and distressed, who were all to appear for him at the last day; if, instead of the cares and anxieties of bad bonds, troublesome mortgages, and ill bargains, he had had the constant comfort of knowing that his treasure was securely laid up where neither moth corrupteth nor thieves break through and steal: could it with any reason be said that he had mistaken the spirit and dignity of his order, or lessened any of that happiness which is to be found in his sacred employments? If, instead of rejoicing in the happiness of a second living, he had thought it as unbecoming the office of a clergyman to traffic for gain in holy things as to open a shop; if he had thought it better to recommend some honest labour to his niece than to support her in idleness by the labours of a curate, better that she should want fine clothes and a rich husband than that cures of souls should be farmed about, and brother clergymen not suffered to live by those altars at which they serve:—if this had

been the spirit of Cognatus, could it with any reason be said that these rules of religion, this strictness of piety, had robbed Cognatus of any real happiness? Could it be said that a life thus governed by the spirit of the gospel must be dull and melancholy, if compared to that of raising a fortune for a niece? (p. 213).

NEGOTIUS

HIS IMMENSE BUSINESS

NEGOTIUS is a temperate, honest man. He served his time under a master of great trade, but has by his own management made it a more considerable business than ever it was before. For thirty years last past he has wrote fifty or sixty letters in a week, and is busy in corresponding with all parts of Europe. The general good of trade seems to Negotius to be the general good of life; whomsoever he admires, whatever he commends or condemns, either in church or state, is admired, commended, with some regard to trade. As money is continually pouring in upon him, so he often lets it go in various kinds of expense and generosity, and sometimes in ways of charity.

Negotius is always ready to join in any public contribution. If a purse is making at any place where he happens to be, whether it be to buy a plate for a horse race, or to redeem a prisoner out of gaol, you are always sure of having something from him. He has given a fine ring of bells to a church in the country, and there is much expectation that he will some time or other make a more beautiful front to the market-house than has yet been seen in any place. For it is the generous spirit of Negotius to do nothing in a mean way.

If you ask what it is that has secured Negotius from all scandalous vices, it is the same thing that has kept him from all strictness of devotion; it is his great business. He has always had too many important things in his head, his thoughts have been too much employed, to suffer him to fall either into any course of rakery, or to feel the necessity of an inward solid piety. For this

reason he hears of the pleasures of debauchery and the pleasures of piety with the same indifferency, and has no more desire of living in the one than in the other, because neither of them consists with that turn of mind and multiplicity of business which are his happiness. If Negotius was asked what it is which he drives at in life, he would be as much at a loss for an answer as if he was asked what any other person was thinking of. For though he always seems to himself to know what he is doing, and has many things in his head which are the motives of his actions, yet he cannot tell you of any one general end of life that he has chosen with deliberation as being truly worthy of all his labour and pains. He has several confused notions in his head which have been a long time there, such as these, viz., That it is something great to have more business than other people, to have more dealings upon his hands than an hundred of the same profession, to grow continually richer and richer, and to raise an immense fortune before he dies. The thing that seems to give Negotius the greatest life and spirit, and to be most in his thoughts, is an expectation that he has, that he shall die richer than any of his business ever did. . . .

But further: Let it now be supposed that Negotius, when first entered into business, happening to read the gospel with attention and eyes open, found that he had a much greater business upon his hands than that to which he had served an apprenticeship; that there were things which belong to man of much more importance than all that our eyes can see, so glorious as to deserve all our thoughts, so dangerous as to need all our care, and so certain as never to deceive the faithful labourer. Let it be supposed that from reading this book he had discovered that his soul was more to him than his body, that it was better to grow in the virtues of the soul than to have a large body or a full purse, that it was better to be fit for heaven than to have variety of fine houses upon the earth, that it was better to secure an

everlasting happiness than to have plenty of things which he cannot keep, better to live in habits of humility, piety, devotion, charity, and self-denial than to die unprepared for judgment, better to be most like our Saviour or some eminent saint than to excel all the tradesmen in the world in business and bulk of fortune. Let it be supposed that Negotius, believing these things to be true, entirely devoted himself to God at his first setting out in the world, resolving to pursue his business no further than was consistent with great devotion, humility, and self-denial, and for no other ends but to provide himself with a sober subsistence, and to do all the good that he could to the souls and bodies of his fellow-creatures. Let it therefore be supposed that, instead of the continual hurry of business, he was frequent in his retirements, and a strict observer of all the hours of prayer; that instead of restless desires after more riches his soul had been full of the love of God and heavenly affection, constantly watching against worldly tempers, and always aspiring after divine grace; that instead of worldly cares and contrivances he was busy in fortifying his soul against all approaches of sin; that instead of costly show and expensive generosity of a splendid life he loved and exercised all instances of humility and lowliness; that instead of great treats and full tables his house only furnished a sober refreshment to those that wanted it. Let it be supposed that his contentment kept him free from all kinds of envy, that his piety made him thankful to God in all crosses and disappointments, that his charity kept him from being rich by a continual distribution to all objects of compassion.

Now, had this been the Christian spirit of Negotius, can any one say that he had lost the true joy and happiness of life by thus conforming to the spirit and living up to the hopes of the gospel? Can it be said that a life made exemplary by such virtues as these, which keep heaven always in our sight, which

both delight and exalt the soul here and prepare it for the presence of God hereafter, must be poor and dull, if compared to that of heaping up riches, which can neither stay with us nor we with them? (pp. 216, 220).

MUNDANUS

A MAN OF PARTS

MUNDANUS is a man of excellent parts and clear apprehension. He is well advanced in age, and has made a great figure in business. Every part of trade and business that has fallen in his way has had some improvement from him, and he is always contriving to carry every method of doing anything well to its greatest height. Mundanus aims at the greatest perfection in everything. The soundness and strength of his mind, and his just way of thinking upon things, make him intent upon removing all imperfections. He can tell you all the defects and errors in all the common methods, whether of trade, building, or improving land, or manufactures. The clearness and strength of his understanding, which he is constantly improving by continual exercise in these matters, by often digesting his thoughts in writing, and trying everything every way, has rendered him a great master of most concerns in human life.

Thus has Mundanus gone on increasing his knowledge and judgment as fast as his years came upon him. The one only thing which has not fallen under his improvement nor received any benefit from his judicious mind is his devotion. This is just in the same poor state it was when he was only six years of age, and the old man prays now in that little form of words which his mother used to hear him repeat night and morning. This Mundanus, that hardly ever saw the poorest utensil, or ever took the meanest trifle into his hand, without considering how it might be made or used to better advantage, has gone all his life long praying in the same manner as when he was a child, without ever considering how much better or oftener he might pray, without

considering how improvable the spirit of devotion is, how many helps a wise and reasonable man may call to his assistance, and how necessary it is that our prayers should be enlarged, varied, and suited to the particular state and condition of our lives. If Mundanus sees a book of devotion he passes it by as he does a spelling-book, because he remembers that he learned to pray so many years ago under his mother when he learned to spell.

How poor and pitiable is the conduct of this man of sense, who has so much judgment and understanding in everything but that which is the whole wisdom of man! And how miserably do many people, more or less, imitate this conduct! All which seems to be owing to a strange infatuated state of negligence, which keeps people from considering what devotion is. For if they did but once proceed so far as to reflect about it, or ask themselves any questions concerning it, they would soon see that the spirit of devotion was like any other sense or understanding, that is only to be improved by study, care, application, and the use of such means and helps as are necessary to make a man a proficient in any art or science (p. 254).

CLASSICUS

HIS GREEK BIBLE

CLASSICUS is a man of learning, and well versed in all the best authors of antiquity. He has read them so much that he has entered into their spirit, and can very ingeniously imitate the manner of any of them. All their thoughts are his thoughts, and he can express himself in their language. He is so great a friend to this improvement of the mind that if he lights on a young scholar he never fails to advise him concerning his studies. Classicus tells his young man he must not think that he has done enough when he has only learned languages, but that he must be daily conversant with the best authors, read them again and again, catch their spirit by living with them, and that

there is no other way of becoming like them, or of making himself a man of taste and judgment.

How wise might Classicus have been, and how much good might he have done in the world, if he had but thought as justly of devotion as he does of learning! He never, indeed, says anything shocking or offensive about devotion, because he never thinks or talks about it. It suffers nothing from him but neglect and disregard. The two Testaments would not have had so much as a place amongst his books but that they are both to be had in Greek. Classicus thinks that he sufficiently shews his regard for the holy Scripture when he tells you that he has no other books of piety besides them.

It is very well, Classicus, that you prefer the Bible to all other books of piety; he has no judgment that is not thus far of your opinion. But if you will have no other book of piety besides the Bible because it is the best, how comes it, Classicus, that you do not content yourself with one of the best books amongst the Greeks and Romans? How comes it that you are so greedy and eager after all of them? How comes it that you think the knowledge of one is a necessary help to the knowledge of the other? How comes it that you are so earnest, so laborious, so expensive of your time and money to restore broken periods and scraps of the ancients?

How comes it that you read so many commentators upon Cicero, Horace, and Homer, and not one upon the gospel? How comes it that your love of Cicero and Ovid makes you love to read an author that writes like them; and your esteem for the gospel gives you no desire, nay, prevents your reading such books as breathe the very spirit of the gospel? How comes it that you tell your young scholar he must not content himself with barely understanding his authors, but must be continually reading them all as the only means of entering into their spirit and forming his own judgment according to them? Why then

must the Bible lie alone in your study? Is not the spirit of the saints, the piety of the holy followers of Jesus Christ, as good and necessary a means of entering into the spirit and taste of the gospel as the reading of the ancients is of entering into the spirit of antiquity? Is the spirit of poetry only to be got by much reading of poets and orators? And is not the spirit of devotion to be got in the same way by frequent reading the holy thoughts and pious strains of devout men? Is your young poet to search after every line that may give new wings to his fancy or direct his imagination? And is it not as reasonable for him who desires to improve in the Divine life, that is, in the love of heavenly things, to search after every strain of devotion that may move, kindle, and inflame the holy ardour of his soul? Do you advise your orator to translate the best orations, to commit much of them to memory, to be frequently exercising his talent in this manner, that habits of thinking and speaking justly may be formed in his mind? And is there not the same benefit and advantage to be made by books of devotion? Should not a man use them in the same way, that habits of devotion and aspiring to God in holy thoughts may be well formed in his soul?

Now, the reason why Classicus does not think and judge thus reasonably of devotion, is owing to his never thinking of it in any other manner than as the repeating a form of words. It never in his life entered into his head to think of devotion as a state of the heart, as an improvable talent of the mind, as a temper that is to grow and increase like our reason and judgment, and to be formed in us by such a regular diligent use of proper means as are necessary to form any other wise habit of mind. And it is for want of this that he has been content all his life with the bare letter of prayer, and eagerly bent upon entering into the spirit of heathen poets and orators.

And it is much to be lamented that numbers of scholars are more or less chargeable with this excessive folly, so negligent of

improving their devotion, and so desirous of other poor accomplishments, as if they thought it a nobler talent to be able to write an epigram in the turn of Martial than to live and think and pray to God in the spirit of St. Austin (p. 256).

PATERNUS

THE AUTHOR'S FATHER

PATERNUS lived about two hundred years ago. He had but one son, whom he educated himself in his own house. As they were sitting together in the garden, when the child was ten years old, Paternus thus began to him :—

The little time that you have been in the world, my child, you have spent wholly with me. And my love and tenderness to you has made you look upon me as your only friend and benefactor, and the cause of all the comfort and pleasure that you enjoy. Your heart, I know, would be ready to break with grief if you thought this was the last day that I should live with you. But, my child, though you now think yourself mighty happy because you have hold of my hand, you are now in the hands and under the tender care of a much greater Father and Friend than I am, Whose love to you is far greater than mine, and from Whom you receive such blessings as no mortal can give. That God Whom you have seen me daily worship, Whom I daily call upon to bless both you and me and all mankind, Whose wondrous acts are recorded in those Scriptures which you constantly read; that God Who created the heavens and the earth, Who brought a flood upon the old world, Who saved Noah in the ark, Who was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Whom Job blessed and praised in the greatest afflictions, Who delivered the Israelites out of the hands of the Egyptians, Who was the protector of righteous Joseph, Moses, Joshua, and holy Daniel, Who sent so many prophets into the world, Who sent His Son Jesus Christ to redeem mankind: this God, Who has done all these great things, Who has created

so many millions of men who lived and died before you was born, with Whom the spirits of good men that are departed this life now live, Whom infinite numbers of angels now worship in heaven; this great God Who is the Creator of worlds, of angels, and men, is your loving Father and Friend, your good Creator and Nourisher, from Whom, and not from me, you received your being ten years ago, at the time that I planted that little tender elm which you there see. I myself am not half the age of this shady oak under which we sit; many of our fathers have sat under its boughs, we have all of us called it ours in our turn, though it stands and drops its masters as it drops its leaves.

You see, my son, this wide and large firmament over our heads, where the sun and moon and all the stars appear in their turns. If you was to be carried up to any of these bodies at this vast distance from us, you would still discover others as much above you as the stars that you see here are above the earth. Were you to go up or down, east or west, north or south, you would find the same height without any top and the same depth without any bottom. And yet, my child, so great is God that all these bodies added together are but as a grain of sand in His sight. And yet you are as much the care of this great God and Father of all worlds and all spirits as if He had no son but you, or there was no creature for Him to love and protect but you alone. He numbers the hairs of your head, watches over you sleeping or waking, and has preserved you from a thousand dangers which neither you nor I know anything of. How poor my power is and how little I am able to do for you, you have often seen. Your late sickness has shewn you how little I could do for you in that state, and the frequent pains of your head are plain proofs that I have no power to remove them. I can bring you food and medicines, but have no power to turn them into your relief and nourishment. It is God alone that can do this for you. Therefore, my child, fear and worship and love God. Your eyes indeed cannot yet see Him.

But every thing you see are so many marks of His Power and Presence, and He is nearer to you than anything that you can see. Take Him for your Lord and Father and Friend, look up unto Him as the Fountain and Cause of all the good that you have received through my hands, and reverence me only as the bearer and minister of God's good things unto you. And He that blessed my father before I was born will bless you when I am dead.

Your youth and little mind is only yet acquainted with my family, and, therefore, you think there is no happiness out of it. But, my child, you belong to a greater family than mine, you are a young member of the family of this Almighty Father of all nations, Who has created infinite orders of angels and numberless generations of men to be fellow-members of one and the same society in heaven. You do well to reverence and obey my authority, because God has given me power over you, to bring you up in His fear, and to do for you as the holy fathers recorded in Scripture did for their children who are now in rest and peace with God. I shall in a short time die and leave you to God and yourself, and, if God forgiveth my sins, I shall go to His Son Jesus Christ and live amongst patriarchs and prophets, saints and martyrs, where I shall pray for you and hope for your safe arrival at the same place. Therefore, my child, meditate on these great things, and your soul will soon grow great and noble by so meditating upon them. Let your thoughts often leave these gardens, these fields and farms, to contemplate upon God and heaven, to consider upon angels and the spirits of good men living in light and glory. As you have been used to look to me in all your actions, and have been afraid to do anything unless you first knew my will, so let it now be a rule of your life to look up to God in all your actions, to do everything in His fear, and to abstain from everything that is not according to His will. Bear Him always in your mind, teach your thoughts to reverence Him in every place, for there is no place where He is not. God keepeth a book of life,

wherein all the actions of all men are written; your name is there, my child, and when you die this book will be laid open before men and angels, and, according as your actions are there found, you will either be received to the happiness of those holy men who have died before you, or be turned away amongst wicked spirits that are never to see God any more. Never forget this book, my son, for it is written it must be opened, you must see it, and you must be tried by it. Strive, therefore, to fill it with your good deeds, that the handwriting of God may not appear against you.

God, my child, is all love, and wisdom, and goodness; and everything that He has made, and every action that He does, is the effect of them all. Therefore, you cannot please God but so far as you strive to walk in love, wisdom, and goodness. As all wisdom, love, and goodness proceeds from God, so nothing but love, wisdom, and goodness can lead to God. When you love that which God loves you act with Him, you join yourself to Him, and when you love what He dislikes, then you oppose Him and separate yourself from Him. This is the true and the right way; think what God loves, and do you love it with all your heart. First of all, my child, worship and adore God, think of Him magnificently, speak of Him reverently, magnify His Providence, adore His power, frequent His service, and pray unto Him frequently and constantly. Next to this, love your neighbour, which is all mankind, with such tenderness and affection as you love yourself. Think how God loves all mankind, how merciful He is to them, how tender He is of them, how carefully He preserves them, and then strive to love the world as God loves it. God would have all men to be happy; therefore, do you will and desire the same. All men are great instances of Divine love, therefore let all men be instances of your love.

But, above all, my son, mark this; never do anything through strife, or envy, or emulation, or vain-glory. Never do anything in order to excel other people, but in order to please God, and because

it is His will that you should do everything in the best manner that you can. For if it is once a pleasure to you to excel other people, it will by degrees be a pleasure to you to see other people not so good as yourself. Banish, therefore, every thought of self-pride and self-distinction, and accustom yourself to rejoice in all the excellencies and perfections of your fellow-creatures, and be as glad to see any of their good actions as your own. For as God is as well pleased with their well-doings as with yours, so you ought to desire that everything that is wise and holy and good may be performed in as high a manner by other people as by yourself. Let this, therefore, be your only motive and spur to all good actions, honest industry, and business, to do everything in as perfect and excellent a manner as you can, for this only reason, because it is pleasing to God, Who desires your perfection and writes all your actions in a book. When I am dead, my son, you will be master of all my estate, which will be a great deal more than the necessities of one family require. Therefore, as you are to be charitable to the souls of men and wish them the same happiness with you in heaven, so be charitable to their bodies, and endeavour to make them as happy as you upon earth. As God has created all things for the common good of all men, so let that part of them which has fallen to your share be employed as God would have all employed for the common good of all. Do good, my son, first of all to those that most deserve it, but remember to do good to all. The greatest sinners receive daily instances of God's goodness towards them; He nourishes and preserves them that they may repent and return to Him; do you therefore imitate God, and think no one too bad to receive your relief and kindness when you see that he wants it.

I am teaching you Latin and Greek, not that you should desire to be a great critic, a fine poet, or an eloquent orator; I would not have your heart feel any of these desires, for the desire of these accomplishments is a vanity of the mind, and the masters of them

are generally vain men. For the desire of anything that is not a real good lessens the application of the mind after that which is so. But I teach you these languages that at proper times you may look into the history of past ages and learn the methods of God's providence over the world, that reading the writings of the ancient sages you may see how wisdom and virtue have been the praise of great men of all ages, and fortify your mind by these wise sayings. Let truth and plainness, therefore, be the only ornament of your language, and study nothing but how to think of all things as they deserve, to choose everything that is best, to live according to reason and order, and to act in every part of your life in conformity to the will of God. Study how to fill your heart full of the love of God and the love of your neighbour, and then be content to be no deeper a scholar, no finer a gentleman, than these tempers will make you. As true religion is nothing else but simple nature governed by right reason, so it loves and requires great plainness and simplicity of life. Therefore avoid all superfluous shows of finery and equipage, and let your house be plainly furnished with moderate conveniences. Do not consider what your estate can afford, but what right reason requires. Let your dress be sober, clean, and modest, not to set out the beauty of your person, but to declare the sobriety of your mind, that your outward garb may resemble the inward plainness and simplicity of your heart. For it is highly reasonable that you should be one man, all of a piece, and appear outwardly such as you are inwardly. As to your meat and drink, in them observe the highest rules of Christian temperance and sobriety; consider your body only as the servant and minister of your soul, and only so nourish it as may best perform an humble and obedient service to it.

But, my son, observe this as a most principal thing which I shall remember you of as long as I live with you. Hate and despise all human glory; for it is nothing else but human folly.

It is the greatest snare and the greatest betrayer that you can possibly admit into your heart. Love humility in all its instances, practise it in all its parts, for it is the noblest state of the soul of man; it will set your heart and affections right towards God, and fill you with every temper that is tender and affectionate towards men. Let every day, therefore, be a day of humility, condescend to all the weakness and infirmities of your fellow-creatures, cover their frailties, love their excellencies, encourage their virtues, relieve their wants, rejoice in their prosperities, compassionate their distress, receive their friendship, overlook their unkindness, forgive their malice, be a servant of servants, and condescend to do the lowest offices to the lowest of mankind. Aspire after nothing but your own purity and perfection, and have no ambition but to do everything in so reasonable and religious a manner that you may be glad that God is everywhere present, and sees and observes all your actions. The greatest trial of humility is an humble behaviour towards your equals in age, estate, and condition of life. Therefore be careful of all the motions of your heart towards these people. Let all your behaviour towards them be governed by unfeigned love. Have no desire to put any of your equals below you, nor any anger at those that would put themselves above you. If they are proud, they are ill of a very bad distemper; let them therefore have your tender pity, and, perhaps, your meekness may prove an occasion of their cure. But if your humility should do them no good, it will, however, be the greatest good that you can do to yourself. Remember that there is but one man in the world with whom you are to have perpetual contention, and be always striving to exceed him, and that is yourself. The time of practising these precepts, my child, will soon slip through your hands, or rather you will soon slip through it; it seems but the other day since I received these same instructions from my dear father that I am now leaving with you. And the God that gave me ears to hear and a heart to receive what my

father said unto me, will, I hope, give you grace to love and follow the same instructions.

Thus did Paternus educate his son (p. *335*).

MATILDA

MATILDA is a fine woman, of good breeding, great sense, and much religion. She has three daughters that are educated by herself. She will not trust them with any one else, or at any school, for fear they should learn anything ill. She stays with the dancing-master all the time he is with them, because she will hear everything that is said to them. She has heard them read the Scriptures so often that they can repeat great part of it without book; and there is scarce a good book of devotion but you may find it in their closets. AND HER DAUGHTERS

Had Matilda lived in the first ages of Christianity, when it was practised in the fulness and plainness of its doctrines, she had in all probability been one of its greatest saints. But as she was born in corrupt times, where she wants examples of Christian perfection, and hardly ever saw a piety higher than her own, so she has many defects, and communicates them all to her daughters.

Matilda never was meanly dressed in her life; and nothing pleases her in dress but that which is very rich and beautiful to the eye. Her daughters see her great zeal for religion, but then they see an equal earnestness for all sorts of finery. They see she is not negligent of her devotion, but then they see her more careful to preserve her complexion, and to prevent those changes which time and age threaten her with. They are afraid to meet her if they have missed the church, but then they are more afraid to see her if they are not laced as strait as they can possibly be. She often shews them her own picture, which was taken when their father fell in love with her. She tells them how distracted he was with passion at the first sight of her, and that she had never had so

fine a complexion but for the diligence of her good mother, who took exceeding care of it. Matilda is so intent upon all the arts of improving their dress that she has some new fancy almost every day, and leaves no ornament untried, from the richest jewel to the poorest flower. She is so nice and critical in her judgment, so sensible of the smallest error, that the maid is often forced to dress and undress her daughters three or four times a day before she can be satisfied with it. As to the patching, she reserves that to herself; for, she says, if they are not stuck on with judgment, they are rather a prejudice than an advantage to the face. The children see so plainly the temper of their mother, that they even affect to be more pleased with dress and to be more fond of every little ornament than they really are, merely to gain her favour. They saw their eldest sister once brought to her tears, and her perverseness severely reprimanded, for presuming to say that she thought it was better to cover the neck than to go so far naked as the modern dress requires. She stints them in their meals, and is very scrupulous of what they eat and drink, and tells them how many fine shapes she has seen spoiled in her time for want of such care. If a pimple rises in their faces she is in a great fright, and they themselves are as afraid to see her with it as if they had committed some great sin. Whenever they begin to look too sanguine and healthful, she calls in the assistance of the doctor; and if physic or issues will keep the complexion from inclining to coarse or ruddy, she thinks them well employed. By this means they are poor, pale, sickly, infirm creatures, vapoured through want of spirits, crying at the smallest accidents, swooning away at any thing that frights them, and hardly able to bear the weight of their best clothes. The eldest daughter lived as long as she could under this discipline, and died in the twentieth year of her age. When her body was opened, it appeared that her ribs had grown into her liver, and that her other entrails were much hurt, by being crushed together with her stays, which her mother had

ordered to be twitched so strait that it often brought tears into her eyes whilst the maid was dressing her. Her youngest daughter is run away with a gamester, a man in great beauty, who in dressing and dancing has no superior. Matilda says she should die with grief at this accident, but that her conscience tells her she has contributed nothing to it herself. She appeals to their closets, to their books of devotion, to testify what care she has taken to establish her children in a life of solid piety and devotion (p. 351).

EUSEBIA

EUSEBIA is a pious widow, well born and well bred, and has a good estate for five daughters, whom she brings up as one intrusted by God to fit five virgins for the kingdom of heaven. Her family has the same regulation as a religious house, and all its orders tend to the support of a constant, regular devotion. She, her daughters, and her maids meet together at all the hours of prayer in the day and chant psalms and other devotions, and spend the rest of their time in such good works and innocent diversions as render them fit to return to their psalms and prayers. She loves them as her spiritual children, and they reverence her as their spiritual mother, with an affection far above that of the fondest friends. She has divided part of her estate amongst them, that every one may be charitable out of their own stock, and each of them take it in their turns to provide for the poor and sick of the parish. Eusebia brings them up to all kinds of labour that are proper for women, as sewing, knitting, spinning, and all other parts of housewifery, not for their amusement, but that they may be serviceable to themselves and others, and may be saved from those temptations which attend an idle life. She tells them she had rather see them reduced to the necessity of maintaining themselves by their own work than to have riches to excuse themselves

AND HER DAUGHTERS

from labour. For though, says she, you may be able to assist the poor without your labour, yet by your labour you will be able to assist them more. If Eusebia has lived as free from sin as it is possible for human nature, it is because she is always watching and guarding against all instances of pride; and if her virtues are stronger and higher than other people's, it is because they are all founded in a deep humility. My children, says she, when your father died, I was much pitied by my friends as having all the care of a family and the management of an estate fallen upon me. But my own grief was founded upon another principle; I was grieved to see myself deprived of so faithful a friend, and that such an eminent example of Christian virtues should be taken from the eyes of his children before they were of an age to love and follow it. But as to worldly cares, which my friends thought so heavy upon me, they are most of them of our own making, and fall away as soon as we know ourselves. If a person in a dream is disturbed with strange appearances, his trouble is over as soon as he is awake and sees that it was the folly of a dream. Now, when a right knowledge of ourselves enters into our minds, it makes as great change in all our thoughts and apprehensions as when we awake from the wanderings of a dream. We acknowledge a man to be mad, or melancholy, who fancies himself to be a glass, and so is afraid of stirring; or, taking himself to be wax, dare not let the sun shine upon him. But, my children, there are things in the world which pass for wisdom, politeness, grandeur, happiness, and fine breeding, which shew as great ignorance of ourselves, and might as justly pass for thorough madness, as when a man fancies himself to be glass or ice. A woman that dares not appear in the world without fine clothes, that thinks it happiness to have a face finely coloured, to have a skin delicately fair, that had rather die than be reduced to poverty and be forced to work for a poor maintenance, is as ignorant of herself to the full as he that fancies himself to be glass.

For this reason all my discourse with you has been to acquaint you with yourselves, and to accustom you to such books and devotions as may best instruct you in this greatest of all knowledge. You would think it hard not to know the family into which you were born, what ancestors you were descended from, and what estate was to come to you. But, my children, you may know all this with exactness, and yet be as ignorant of yourselves as he that takes himself to be wax. For though you were all of you born of my body, and bear your father's name, yet you are all of you pure spirits. I do not mean that you have not bodies that want meat and drink and sleep and clothing, but that all that deserves to be called you, is nothing else but spirit:—a being spiritual and rational in its nature, that is as contrary to all fleshly or corporeal beings, as life is contrary to death; that is made in the image of God, to live for ever, never to cease any more, but to enjoy life and reason and knowledge and happiness in the presence of God and the society of angels and glorious spirits to all eternity. Everything that you call yours, besides this spirit, is but like your clothing; something that is only to be used for awhile, and then to end and die and wear away, and to signify no more to you than the clothing and bodies of other people. But, my children, you are not only in this manner spirits, but you are fallen spirits that began your life in a state of corruption and disorder, full of tempers and passions that blind and darken the reason of your mind and incline you to that which is hurtful. Your bodies are not only poor and perishing like your clothes, but they are like infected clothes that fill you with ill diseases and distempers, which oppress the soul with sickly appetites and vain cravings. So that all of us are like two beings, that have, as it were, two hearts within us; with the one we see and taste and admire reason, purity, and holiness; with the other we incline to pride and vanity and sensual delights. This internal war we always feel within us more or less; and if you would know the

one thing necessary to all the world, it is this: to preserve and perfect all that is rational, holy, and divine in our nature, and to mortify, remove, and destroy all that vanity, pride, and sensuality which springs from the corruption of our state.

Could you think, my children, when you look at the world, and see what customs and fashions and pleasures and troubles and projects and tempers employ the hearts and time of mankind, that things were thus as I have told you? But do not you be affected at these things; the world is in a great dream, and but few people are awake in it. We fancy that we fall into darkness when we die; but, alas! we are most of us in the dark till then, and the eyes of our souls only then begin to see when our bodily eyes are closing. You see, then, your state, my children; you are to honour, improve, and perfect the spirit that is within you, you are to prepare it for the kingdom of heaven, to nourish it with the love of God and of virtue, to adorn it with good works, and to make it as holy and heavenly as you can. You are to preserve it from the errors and vanities of the world; to save it from the corruptions of the body, from those false delights and sensual tempers which the body tempts it with. You are to nourish your spirits with pious readings and holy meditations, with watchings, fastings, and prayers, that you may taste and relish and desire that eternal state which is to begin when this life ends. As to your bodies, you are to consider them as poor perishing things that are sickly and corrupt at present, and will soon drop into common dust. You are to watch over them as enemies that are always trying to tempt and betray you, and so never follow their advice and counsel; you are to consider them as the place and habitation of your souls, and so keep them pure and clean and decent; you are to consider them as the servants and instruments of action, and so give them food and rest and raiment, that they may be strong and healthful to do the duties of a charitable, useful, pious life. Whilst you live thus, you live like yourselves, and whenever you have less regard to

your souls or more regard to your bodies than this comes to; whenever you are more intent upon adorning your persons than upon the perfecting your souls, you are much more beside yourselves than he that had rather have a laced coat than a healthful body. For this reason, my children, I have taught you nothing that was dangerous for you to learn; I have kept you from every thing that might betray you into weakness and folly, or make you think anything fine but a fine mind, anything happy but the favour of God, or anything desirable but to do all the good you possibly can. Instead of the vain immodest entertainment of plays and operas, I have taught you to delight in visiting the sick and poor. What music and dancing and diversions are to many in the world, that prayers and devotions and psalms are to you. Your hands have not been employed in plaiting the hair and adorning your persons; but in making clothes for the naked. You have not wasted your fortunes upon yourselves, but have added your labour to them for to do more good to other people. Instead of forced shapes, patched faces, genteel airs, and affected motions, I have taught you to conceal your bodies with modest garments, and let the world have nothing to view of you but the plainness, the sincerity, and humility of all your behaviour. You know, my children, the high perfection and the great rewards of virginity; you know how it frees from worldly cares and troubles, and furnishes means and opportunities of higher advancements in a divine life; therefore, love and esteem and honour virginity; bless God for all that glorious company of holy virgins that from the beginning of Christianity have, in the several ages of the church, renounced the cares and pleasures of matrimony, to be perpetual examples of solitude, contemplation, and prayer. But as every one has their proper gift from God, as I look upon you all to be so many great blessings of a married state; so I leave it to your choice, either to do as I have done, or to aspire after higher degrees of perfection in a virgin state of life. I desire

nothing, I press nothing upon you, but to make the most of human life, and to aspire after perfection in whatever state of life you choose. Never, therefore, consider yourselves as persons that are to be seen, admired, and courted by men, but as poor sinners that are to save yourselves from the vanities and follies of a miserable world by humility, devotion, and self-denial. Learn to live for your own sakes and the service of God, and let nothing in the world be of any value with you but that which you can turn into a service to God and a means of your future happiness. Consider often how powerfully you are called to a virtuous life, and what great and glorious things God has done for you, to make you in love with everything that can promote His glory. Think upon the vanity and shortness of human life, and let death and eternity be often in your minds; for these thoughts will strengthen and exalt your minds, make you wise and judicious, and truly sensible of the littleness of all human things. Think of the happiness of prophets and apostles, saints and martyrs, who are now rejoicing in the presence of God, and see themselves possessors of eternal glory. And then, think how desirable a thing it is to watch and pray, and do good as they did, that when you die you may have your lot amongst them. Whether married, therefore, or unmarried, consider yourselves as mothers and sisters, as friends and relations to all that want your assistance, and never allow yourselves to be idle whilst others are in want of anything that your hands can make for them. This useful, charitable, humble employment of yourselves is what I recommend to you with great earnestness, as being a substantial part of a wise and pious life. And besides the good you will thereby do to other people, every virtue of your own heart will be very much improved by it. For, next to reading, meditation, and prayer, there is nothing that so secures our hearts from foolish passions, nothing that preserves so holy and wise a frame of mind, as some useful, humble employment of ourselves. Never, therefore, consider your

labour as an amusement that is to get rid of your time and so may be as trifling as you please; but consider it as something that is to be serviceable to yourselves and others, that is to serve some sober ends of life, to save and redeem your time, and make it turn to your account when the works of all people shall be tried by fire. When you were little, I left you to little amusements, to please yourselves in any things that were free from harm; but as you are now grown up to a knowledge of God and yourselves, as your minds are now acquainted with the worth and value of virtue and exalted with the great doctrines of religion, you are now to do nothing as children, but despise everything that is poor, or vain, and impertinent; you are now to make the labours of your hands suitable to the piety of your hearts, and employ themselves for the same ends and with the same spirit as you watch and pray. For if there is any good to be done by your labour, if you can possibly employ yourselves usefully to other people, how silly is it, how contrary to the wisdom of religion, to make that a mere amusement which might as easily be made an exercise of the greatest charity? What would you think of the wisdom of him that should employ his time in distilling of waters and making liquors which nobody could use, merely to amuse himself with the variety of their colour and clearness, when with less labour and expense he might satisfy the wants of those who have nothing to drink? Yet he would be as wisely employed as those that are amusing themselves with such tedious works as they neither need nor hardly know how to use when they are finished, when with less labour and expense they might be doing as much good as he that is clothing the naked or visiting the sick. Be glad, therefore, to know the wants of the poorest people, and let your hands be employed in making such mean and ordinary things for them as their necessities require. By thus making your labour a gift and service to the poor, your ordinary work will be changed into a holy service and made as acceptable to God as your devotions.

And charity is the greatest of all virtues, as it always was the chief temper of the greatest saints; so nothing can make your own charity more amiable in the sight of God than this method of adding your labour to it. The humility also of this employment will be as beneficial to you as the charity of it. It will keep you from all vain and proud thoughts of your own state and distinction in life, and from treating the poor as creatures of a different species. By accustoming yourselves to this labour and service for the poor, as the representatives of Jesus Christ, you will soon find your heart softened into the greatest meekness and lowliness towards them. You will reverence their estate and condition, think it an honour to serve them, and never be so pleased with yourself as when you are most humbly employed in their service. This will make you true disciples of your meek Lord and Master, Who came into the world not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and though He was Lord of all, and amongst the creatures of His own making, yet was amongst them as one that serveth. Christianity has then had its most glorious effects upon your hearts, when it has thus changed your spirit, removed all the pride of life from you, and made you delight in humbling yourselves beneath the lowest of all your fellow-creatures.

Live, therefore, my children, as you have begun your lives, in humble labour for the good of others, and let ceremonious visits and vain acquaintances have as little of your time as you possibly can. Contract no foolish friendships or vain fondnesses for particular persons, but love them most that most turn your love towards God, and your compassion towards all the world.

But, above all, avoid the conversation of fine-bred fops and beaux, and hate nothing more than the idle discourse, the flattery, and compliments of that sort of men, for they are the shame of their own sex and ought to be the abhorrence of yours. When you go abroad, let humility, modesty, and a decent carriage be all the state that you take upon you, and let tenderness, compassion,

and good-nature be all the fine-breeding that you shew in any place. If evil-speaking, scandal, or backbiting be the conversation where you happen to be, keep your heart and your tongue to yourself; be as much grieved as if you were amongst cursing and swearing, and retire as soon as you can. Though you intend to marry, yet let the time never come till you find a man that has those perfections which you have been labouring after yourselves, who is likely to be a friend to all your virtues, and with whom it is better to live than to want the benefit of his example. Love poverty, and reverence poor people; as for many reasons, so particularly for this, because our Blessed Saviour was one of the number, and because you may make them all so many friends and advocates with God for you. Visit and converse with them frequently; you will often find simplicity, innocence, patience, fortitude, and great piety among them, and where they are not so, your good example may amend them. Rejoice at every opportunity of doing an humble action, and exercising the meekness of your minds, whether it be, as the Scripture expresses it, in washing the saints' feet, that is, in waiting upon and serving those that are below you, or in bearing with the haughtiness and ill manners of those that are your equals or above you. For there is nothing better than humility; it is the fruitful soil of all virtues, and everything that is kind and good naturally grows from it.

Therefore, my children, pray for and practise humility, and reject everything in dress or carriage or conversation that has any appearance of pride. Strive to do everything that is praiseworthy, but do nothing in order to be praised, nor think of any reward for all your labours of love and virtues till Christ cometh with all His holy angels. And above all, my children, have a care of vain and proud thoughts of your own virtues. For, as soon as ever people live different from the common way of the world, and despise its vanities, the devil represents to their minds the height of their own perfections, and is content that they should excel in good

works, provided that he can but make them proud of them. Therefore, watch over your virtues with a jealous eye, and reject every vain thought as you would reject the most wicked imagination, and think what a loss it would be to you to have all the fruit of your good works devoured by the vanity of your own minds. Never, therefore, allow yourselves to despise those who do not follow your rules of life, but force your hearts to love them, and pray to God for them; and let humility be always whispering it into your ears that you yourselves will fall from those rules tomorrow if God should leave you to your own strength and wisdom. When, therefore, you have spent days and weeks well, do not suffer your hearts to contemplate anything as your own, but give all the glory to the goodness of God, Who has carried you through such rules of holy living as you were not able to observe by your own strength; and take care to begin the next day, not as proficients in virtue that can do great matters, but as poor beginners, that want the daily assistance of God to save you from the grossest sins.

Your dear father was an humble, watchful, pious, wise man. Whilst his sickness would suffer him to talk with me, his discourse was chiefly about your education. He knew the benefits of humility, he saw the ruins which pride made in our sex; and, therefore, he conjured me with the tenderest expressions to renounce the fashionable way of educating daughters in pride and softness, in the care of their beauty and dress, and to bring you all up in the plainest, simplest instances of an humble, holy, and industrious life. He taught me an admirable rule of humility which he practised all the days of his life, which was this, to let no morning pass without thinking upon some frailty and infirmity of our own that may put us to confusion, make us blush inwardly, and entertain a mean opinion of ourselves. Think, therefore, my children, that the soul of your good father, who is now with God, speaks to you through my mouth; and let the double desire of your father, who

is gone, and of me, who am with you, prevail upon you to love God, to study your own perfection, to practise humility, and with innocent labour and charity do all the good that you can to all your fellow-creatures till God calls you to another life.

Thus did the pious widow educate her daughters (p. 358).

OURANIUS

IN HIS PARISH

OURANIUS is a holy priest, full of the spirit of the gospel, watching, labouring, and praying for a poor country village. Every soul in it is as dear to him as himself; and he loves them all as he loves himself, because he prays for them all as often as he prays for himself. If his whole life is one continual exercise of great zeal and labour, hardly ever satisfied with any degrees of care and watchfulness, it is because he has learned the great value of souls by so often appearing before God as an intercessor for them. He never thinks he can love or do enough for his flock, because he never considers them in any other view than as so many persons that, by receiving the gifts and graces of God, are to become his hope, his joy, and his crown of rejoicing. Ouranius goes about his parish and visits everybody in it, but visits in the same spirit of piety that he preaches to them; he visits them to encourage their virtues, to assist them with his advice and counsel, to discover their manner of life, and to know the state of their souls, that he may intercede with God for them according to their particular necessities.

When Ouranius first entered into holy orders he had a haughtiness in his temper, a great contempt and disregard for all foolish and unreasonable people; but he has prayed away this spirit, and has now the greatest tenderness for the most obstinate sinners, because he is always hoping that God will, sooner or later, hear those prayers that he makes for their repentance. The rudeness, ill-nature, or perverse behaviour of any of his flock used at first to

betray him into impatience, but now it raises no other passion in him than a desire of being upon his knees in prayer to God for them. Thus have his prayers for others altered and amended the state of his own heart. It would strangely delight you to see with what spirit he converses, with what tenderness he reproves, with what affection he exhorts, and with what vigour he preaches; and it is all owing to this, because he reproves, exhorts, and preaches to those for whom he first prays to God. This devotion softens his heart, enlightens his mind, sweetens his temper, and makes every thing that comes from him instructive, amiable, and affecting. At his first coming to his little village, it was as disagreeable to him as a prison, and every day seemed too tedious to be endured in so retired a place. He thought his parish was too full of poor and mean people that were none of them fit for the conversation of a gentleman. This put him upon a close application to his studies. He kept much at home, writ notes upon Homer and Plautus, and sometimes thought it hard to be called to pray by any poor body when he was just in the midst of one of Homer's battles. This was his polite, or, I may rather say, poor, ignorant turn of mind before devotion had got the government of his heart. But now, his days are so far from being tedious, or his parish too great a retirement, that he now only wants more time to do that variety of good which his soul thirsts after. The solitude of his little parish is become matter of great comfort to him, because he hopes that God has placed him and his flock there to make it their way to heaven. He can now not only converse with but gladly attend and wait upon the poorest kind of people. He is now daily watching over the weak and infirm, humbling himself to perverse, rude, ignorant people, wherever he can find them; and is so far from desiring to be considered as a gentleman that he desires to be used as the servant of all; and in the spirit of his Lord and Master girds himself, and is glad to kneel down and wash any of their feet. He now thinks the poorest creature in his parish good

enough and great enough to deserve the humblest attendances, the kindest friendships, the tenderest offices he can possibly shew them. He is so far now from wanting agreeable company that he thinks there is no better conversation in the world than to be talking with poor and mean people about the kingdom of heaven. All these noble thoughts and divine sentiments are the effects of his great devotion; he presents every one so often before God in his prayers that he never thinks he can esteem, reverence, or serve those enough for whom he implores so many mercies from God.

Ouranius is mightily affected with this passage of holy Scripture, The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. This makes him practise all the arts of holy living, and aspire after every instance of piety and righteousness, that his prayers for his flock may have their full force and avail much with God. For this reason he has sold a small estate that he had, and has erected a charitable retirement for ancient, poor people, to live in prayer and piety, that his prayers being assisted by such good works may pierce the clouds and bring down blessings upon those souls committed to his care.

Ouranius reads how God Himself said unto Abimelech concerning Abraham: He is a prophet; he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live. And, again, how he said of Job: And my servant, Job, shall pray for you; for him will I accept. From these passages Ouranius justly concludes that the prayers of men eminent for holiness of life have an extraordinary power with God; that He grants to other people such pardons, reliefs, and blessings through their prayers as would not be granted to men of less piety and perfection. This makes Ouranius exceeding studious of Christian perfection, searching after every grace and holy temper, purifying his heart all manner of ways, fearful of every error and defect in his life, lest his prayers for his flock should be less availing with God through his own defects in holiness. This makes

him careful of every temper of his heart, give alms of all that he hath, watch and fast and mortify and live according to the strictest rules of temperance, meekness, and humility, that he may be in some degree like an Abraham or a Job in his parish, and make such prayers for them as God will hear and accept.

These are the happy effects which a devout intercession hath produced in the life of Ouranius (p. 416).

SUSURRUS

THE PIOUS WHISPERER

SUSURRUS is a pious, temperate, good man, remarkable for abundance of excellent qualities. No one more constant at the service of the church, or whose heart is more affected with it. His charity is so great that he almost starves himself to be able to give greater alms to the poor.

Yet Susurrus had a prodigious failing along with these great virtues. He had a mighty inclination to hear and discover all the defects and infirmities of all about him. You was welcome to tell him anything of anybody, provided that you did not do it in the style of an enemy. He never disliked an evil-speaker but when his language was rough and passionate. If you would but whisper anything gently, though it was ever so bad in itself, Susurrus was ready to receive it. When he visits, you generally hear him relating how sorry he is for the defects and failings of such a neighbour. He is always letting you know how tender he is of the reputation of his neighbour, how loth to say that which he is forced to say, and how gladly he would conceal it if it could be concealed. Susurrus had such a tender, compassionate manner of relating things the most prejudicial to his neighbour, that he even seemed, both to himself and others, to be exercising a Christian charity at the same time that he was indulging a whispering, evil-speaking temper.

Susurrus once whispered to a particular friend in great secrecy

something too bad to be spoke of publicly. He ended with saying how glad he was that it had not yet took wind, and that he had some hopes it might not be true, though the suspicions were very strong. His friend made him this reply: You say, Susurrus, that you are glad it has not yet taken wind, and that you have some hopes it may not prove true. Go home, therefore, to your closet and pray to God for this man in such a manner and with such earnestness as you would pray for yourself on the like occasion. Beseech God to interpose in his favour, to save him from false accusers, and bring all those to shame who, by uncharitable whispers and secret stories, wound him like those that stab in the dark. And when you have made this prayer then you may, if you please, go tell the same secret to some other friend that you have told to me.

Susurrus was exceedingly affected with this rebuke, and felt the force of it upon his conscience in as lively a manner as if he had seen the books opened at the day of judgment. All other arguments might have been resisted, but it was impossible for Susurrus either to reject or to follow this advice without being equally self-condemned in the highest degree. From that time to this, he has constantly used himself to this method of intercession; and his heart is so entirely changed by it that he can now no more privately whisper anything to the prejudice of another than he can openly pray to God to do people hurt. Whisperings and evil-speakings now hurt his ears like oaths and curses, and he has appointed one day in the week to be a day of penance as long as he lives, to humble himself before God in the sorrowful confession of his former guilt.

It may well be wondered how a man of so much piety as Susurrus could be so long deceived in himself as to live in such a state of scandal and evil-speaking without suspecting himself to be guilty of it. But it was the tenderness and seeming compassion with which he heard and related everything that deceived both

himself and others. This was a falseness of heart which was only to be fully discovered by the true charity of intercession. And if people of virtue, who think as little harm of themselves as Susurrus did, were often to try their spirit by such an intercession, they would often find themselves to be such as they least of all suspected (p. 435).

Other Characters—

JULIUS, EUSEBIA, LEO, CAECUS, CLAUDIUS.

CHARACTERS IN THE 'WAY TO DIVINE KNOWLEDGE'

ACADEMICUS

A DIVINITY STUDENT

WHEN I had taken my degrees I consulted several great divines to put me in a method of studying divinity. . . It would take up near half a day to tell you the work which my learned friends cut out for me. One told me that Hebrew words were all; that they must be read without points, and then the Old Testament is an opened book. He recommended to me a cart-load of lexicons, critics, and commentators upon the Hebrew Bible. Another tells me the Greek Bible is the best; that it corrects the Hebrew in many places; and refers me to a large number of books learnedly writ in the defence of it. Another tells me that church history is the main matter; that I must begin with the first fathers, and follow them through every age of the Church, not forgetting to take the lives of the Roman Emperors along with me as striking great light into the state of the Church in their times. Then I must have recourse to all the councils held and the canons made in every age, which would enable me to see with my own eyes the great corruptions of the Council of Trent. Another, who is not very fond of ancient matters, but wholly bent upon rational Christianity, tells me I need go no higher than the Reformation; that Calvin and Cranmer were very great men; that Chillingworth and Locke ought always to lie upon my table; that I must get an entire set of those learned volumes wrote against Popery in King James's reign, and also be well versed in all

the discourses which Mr. Boyle's and Lady Moyer's Lectures have produced: and then, says he, you will be a match for our greatest enemies, which are the Popish priests and modern Deists. My tutor is very liturgical; he desires me, of all things, to get all the collections that I can of the ancient liturgies and all the authors that treat of such matters; who, he says, are very learned, and very numerous. He has been many years making observations upon them, and is now clear as to the time when certain little particles got entrance into the liturgies, and others were by degrees dropt. He has a friend abroad in search of ancient manuscript liturgies; for, by the bye, said he at parting, I have some suspicion that our Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is essentially defective for want of having a little water in the wine, etc. Another learned friend tells me the *Clementine Constitutions* is the book of books, and that all that lies loose and scattered in the New Testament stands there in its true order and form; and though he will not say that Dr. Clarke and Mr. Whiston are in the right, yet, it might be useful to me to read all the Arian and Socinian writers, provided I stood upon my guard and did it with caution. The last person I consulted advised me to get all the histories of the rise and progress of heresies, and of the lives and characters of heretics. These histories, he said, contract the matter; bring truth and error close in view; and I should find all that collected in a few pages which would have cost me some years to have got together. He also desired me to be well versed in all the casuistical writers and chief schoolmen, for they debate matters to the bottom, dissect every virtue and every vice into its many degrees and parts, and shew how near they can come to one another without touching. And this knowledge, he said, might be useful to me when I came to be a parish priest.

Following the advice of all these counsellors as well as I could, I lighted my candle early in the morning and put it out late at night. In this labour I had been sweating for some years, till

Rusticus, at my first acquaintance with him, seeing my way of life, said to me,—Had you lived about seventeen hundred years ago, you had stood just in the same place as I stand now. I cannot read, and, therefore, says he, all these hundreds of thousands of disputing books and doctrine-books which these seventeen hundred years have produced stand not in my way; they are the same thing to me as if they had never been. And, had you lived at the time mentioned, you had just escaped them all as I do now; because, though you are a very good reader, there were then none of them to be read. Could you, therefore, be content to be one of the primitive Christians, who were as good as any that have been since, you may spare all this labour. Take only the gospel into your hands; deny yourself; renounce the lusts of the flesh; set your affections on things above; call upon God for His Holy Spirit; walk by faith and not by sight; adore the holy Deity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in Whose image and likeness you were at first created, and in Whose name and power you have been baptized to be again the living likeness and holy habitation of His Life and Light and Holy Spirit. Look up to Christ as your Redeemer, your Regenerator, your second Adam; look at Him, as truly He is, the Wisdom and Power of God, sitting at His right hand in heaven, giving forth gifts unto men; governing, sanctifying, teaching, and enlightening with His Holy Spirit, all those that are spiritually-minded, who live in faith and hope and prayer, to be redeemed from the nature and power of this evil world. Follow but this simple, plain spirit of the gospel, loving God with all your heart and your neighbour as yourself, and then you are Christ's disciple, and have His authority to let the dead bury their dead. . . . So ended Rusticus. It is not easy for me to tell you, Theophilus, how much good I received from this simple instruction of honest Master Rusticus; for so I may well call him, since he in so few words taught me a better lesson of wisdom than ever I had heard before. What a project was it to be grasping

after the knowledge of all the opinions, doctrines, disputes, heresies, schisms, councils, canons, alterations, additions, inventions, corruptions, reformations, sects, and churches which seventeen hundred years had brought forth through all the extent of the Christian world! What a project this in order to be a divine, that is, to bear true witness to the power of Christ as a deliverer from the evil of flesh and blood and hell and death, and a raiser of a new birth and life from above! For as this is the divine work of Christ, so he only is an able and a true divine that can bear a faithful testimony to this divine work of Christ. How easy was it for me to have seen with Rusticus that all this labyrinth of learned inquiry into such a dark, thorny wilderness of notions, facts, and opinions could signify no more to me now to my own salvation, to my interest in Christ, and obtaining the Holy Spirit of God, than if I had lived before it had any beginning! But the blind appetite of learning gave me no leisure to apprehend so plain a truth. Books of divinity, indeed, I have not done with; but I will esteem none to be such but those that make known to my heart the inward power and redemption of Jesus Christ. Nor will I seek for anything, even from such books, but that which I ask of God in prayer, namely, how better to know, more to abhor and resist the evil that is in my own nature, and how to attain a supernatural birth of the Divine Life brought forth in me. All besides this is pushpin (p. 101).

Other Characters—

HUMANUS, RUSTICUS, THEOPHILUS.

CHARACTERS IN THE 'SPIRIT OF LOVE'

THEOGENES, EUSEBIUS, THEOPHILUS.

CHARACTERS IN THE 'UNLAWFULNESS OF THE STAGE'

TREBONIA, LEVIS, JUCUNDA.

RULES AND PRAYERS

RULES FOR MY FUTURE CONDUCT

(FOUND AMONG LAW'S COLLEGE PAPERS)

1. To fix it deep in my mind that I have but one business upon my hands, to seek for eternal happiness by doing the will of God.

2. To examine everything that relates to me in this view, as it serves or obstructs this only end of life.

3. To think nothing great or desirable because the world thinks it so, but to form all my judgments of things from the infallible word of God, and direct my life according to it.

4. To avoid all concerns with the world or the ways of it but where religion and charity oblige me to act.

5. To remember frequently, and impress it upon my mind deeply, that no condition of this life is for enjoyment, but for trial; and that every power, ability, or advantage we have, are all so many talents to be accounted for to the Judge of all the world.

6. That the greatness of human nature consists in nothing else but in imitating the Divine Nature. That, therefore, all the greatness of this world, which is not in good actions, is perfectly beside the point.

7. To remember, often and seriously, how much of time is inevitably thrown away, from which I can expect nothing but the charge of guilt; and how little there may be to come on which an eternity depends.

8. To avoid all excess in eating and drinking.

9. To spend as little time as I possibly can among such persons as can receive no benefit from me nor I from them.

10. To be always fearful of letting my time slip away without some fruit.

11. To avoid all idleness.

12. To call to mind the presence of God whenever I find myself under any temptation to sin, and to have immediate recourse to prayer.

13. To think humbly of myself, and with great charity of all others.

14. To forbear from all evil-speaking.

15. To think often of the life of Christ, and propose it as a pattern to myself.

16. To pray privately thrice a day, besides my morning and evening prayers.

17. To keep from as much as I can, without offence.

18. To spend some time in giving an account of the day, previous to evening prayer: how have I spent this day? What sin have I committed? What temptations have I withstood? Have I performed all my duty?

[Walton's *Notes and Materials, etc.*, p. 345.]

RULES TO BE OBEYED AND PRAYERS TO BE OFFERED BY ALL GIRLS ATTENDING KING'S CLIFFE CHARITY SCHOOL

THE first three rules recite the time of coming in winter and summer, the courteous behaviour to be practised, and the number of lessons to be said before the hours of eleven and five, in the morning and afternoon.

4. Every one at her first entrance in the morning, shall kneel down by her mistress, and, with her hands held up together, shall say the prayers appointed for the morning; and at their going away shall, in their turn, say such prayers as are for the evening, and at their rising up shall make a curtsey.

5. This method is to be strictly observed till every child is very perfect in repeating those prayers. They must also be often and strictly commanded to say the same prayers night and morning at home.

6. Every Thursday and Saturday, in the afternoon, they shall only say two lessons, and afterwards be examined on both those days in the Catechism, making a curtsey at the end of every answer.

7. Every girl, as soon as she can say the whole Catechism in a ready manner, shall have a shilling given her before them all, with commendation and exhortation to go on in her duty.

8. Every girl shall have sixpence given her as soon as she can say by heart the morning and evening prayers.

9. Every one that shall get by heart the fifth, sixth, seventh, eighteenth, or twenty-fifth chapters of St. Matthew, or the sixth

or seventh of St. Luke, or the eighteenth or nineteenth of St. John, or the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians from the twentieth verse, shall have for every such chapter a shilling given her in the presence of all the rest, with commendation and exhortation to love and practise the word of God. They shall also ever after repeat these chapters, one at a time, once every week, in a plain and distinct manner, at which time every other girl shall leave off her work and quietly listen to the chapter that is repeating. At the end of which chapter they shall all (lifting up their eyes towards heaven) say, 'Glory be to Thee, O Lord, for this Thy holy word,' and, making a curtsey, every one shall sit down in their proper seat.

10. No one shall talk or laugh or make any noise in the room where her mistress is; but every one shall keep their proper place, seated at some little distance from each other, whether at work or at their lessons.

11. Every girl that gives the lie to any other girl, or to any person, or that calls another fool, or uses any rude or unmannerly word shall, the morning afterwards, as soon as they are all there, be obliged to kneel down before her mistress, and in the presence of them all say in a plain and distinct manner these words:—

'Our Blessed Saviour Jesus Christ hath said that whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. I, therefore, am heartily sorry for the wicked words that I have spoken to my fellow Christian; I humbly beg pardon of God and of all you that are here present, hoping and promising, by the help of God, never to offend again in the like manner.'

Then shall the girl that she had abused come and take her up from her knees and kiss her; and, both turning to their mistress, they shall make a curtsey and return to their seats.

12. Any girl that shall be found out to have told a lie, to have cursed or swore, or done any undutiful thing to her parents, or to have stolen anything from any other girl, shall stand chained a whole morning to some particular part of the room by herself, and

afterwards, in the presence of them all, shall, upon her knees, repeat these words :—

'The word of God teaches us that if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. I therefore, a wicked child, humbly confess before God and all you that are here present that I have grievously sinned against God in lying [or cursing, swearing, or stealing, as the case may be]. I am heartily sorry for this great sin, and humbly on my knees beg of God to forgive me. I desire you all to pray for me and to forgive me, and I promise by God's grace never to commit the like fault.'

Then shall the mistress and all the girls kneel down, and the mistress shall say this prayer :—

'Almighty God, Who art always more ready to hear than we to pray, Who desirest not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his sins and be saved: we beseech Thee to have mercy upon this child, who hath thus confessed her sins unto Thee; and grant that both she, and all of us here present, may, by the assistance of Thy Holy Spirit, be preserved from all sin, strengthened in all goodness, and serve Thee faithfully all the days of our life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.'

Then shall all the girls rise and, making a curtsey, return to their seats.

13. Any girl that continues to commit these faults, after the third time Mr. George Law shall be called in, and he shall turn her away.

14. Every girl, when she walks in the streets, shall make curtseys to all masters and mistresses of families, and to all ancient people, whether rich or poor. They shall also make a curtsey when they enter into any house, and at their coming out of it.

15. Every girl shall be constant at church at all times of divine service, as well on the week-days as on Sundays. They shall always go up to be catechised at those times that the minister appoints. They shall all learn to sing psalms, and get those by heart that are most commonly sung.

They must always go to church at all funerals, and, placing themselves at those times together, all of them join in singing the psalm that shall be then appointed.

16. Every girl that refuses or neglects to observe these rules shall be turned away, and another chosen into her place.

17. The mistress shall every fortnight, on the Monday morning, constantly read over all these rules to all the children in a plain, distinct manner, that they may fully understand them. After which all shall kneel down and the mistress shall say the following prayer, every child repeating it after her, and at the end all saying Amen :—

'Almighty and most merciful Father, we give Thee humble thanks for all Thy mercies to us and to all mankind. We bless Thy Holy Name for that Thou hast called us to this place, to be brought up in Thy faith and fear, to learn Thy holy word, and turn our hearts to Thee in the days of our youth. We here offer ourselves, our souls and bodies, unto Thee. We humbly beseech Thee to assist us with Thy grace, that we may carefully observe these and all other rules of holy living that shall be taught us. Grant, Holy Father, that we, thus beginning our lives in humility and labour, in prayer and reading, may, as we grow in age, grow in good works, and at last obtain the salvation of our souls through the merits and mediation of our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Our Father, Which art in heaven, etc.'

18. This prayer is to be said every morning before they begin their lessons or work by the mistress, the girls saying after her :—

'Oh, Eternal and Glorious God, in Whom we all live and move and have our being, I bless Thy Holy Name for preserving me from the dangers of the night past, and granting me another morning to praise Thy mercy and goodness towards me. I, Thy weak creature, wanting Thy help and assistance, humbly beseech Thee to be my Guide and Protector in all that I shall do this day. Grant I may set Thee always before my eyes, and that, knowing Thee to be

everywhere present, I may in all places be afraid of thinking, saying, or doing any kind of evil. Make me modest and humble in all my behaviour, diligent and laborious in my proper work, dutiful and obedient to my parents, masters, and mistresses; and, above all, thankful to Thee for all Thy mercies. Fill my heart with Thy Holy Spirit, that I may love to pray to Thee, delight in reading the Holy Scriptures, be thankful to those that teach me my duty, and take daily care to remember and practise all that I am taught. All this I humbly beseech Thee to grant me, for the sake and sufferings of my Blessed Saviour Jesus Christ. Our Father, Which art in heaven, etc.'

A private prayer for the evening to be taught the girls:—

'Almighty God, Who art everywhere present, Who seest and knowest all our words and actions, forgive me, I beseech Thee, all the evils that I have this day done in Thy sight. Grant that all the sins of my life past may be washed away by the precious blood of my Saviour, Jesus Christ; and that through His merits I may obtain the assistance of Thy Holy Spirit, to live soberly, righteously, and godly all the days of my life. Into Thy hands, O God, I commend my soul and my body this night. Bless me, I beseech Thee, with quiet rest and sleep, and grant that I may be early up at my praises and prayers unto Thee. Bless, O Lord, with Thy favour and goodness, my parents, relations, friends, and enemies of all kinds; do good, I beseech Thee, to their souls and bodies here, and bring them to everlasting happiness hereafter, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Our Father, Which art in heaven, etc.'

A prayer to be said after the chanting of the psalm, at nine o'clock in the morning:—

'O, Eternal God, Fountain of all light and glory, Who, about this hour of the day, didst send down Thy Holy Spirit in the shape of cloven tongues upon the apostles, send down, I beseech Thee, the same Spirit of Holiness upon me. Make my soul and body a temple of Thy Divine Spirit, that I may be always

full of holy desires and heavenly affections. Grant that I may watch and keep my heart with all diligence, be so careful of all my words, so just and pious in all my actions, that I may never grieve or separate Thy Holy Spirit from me. Lord, fill my soul with heavenly light, with divine wisdom, that I may be delivered from the vanities and follies of this world; that I may love Thee above all things, delight in holiness and virtue, and in all my actions seek Thy honour and the salvation of my own soul. This I beg through the merits and sufferings of my Blessed Saviour Jesus Christ. Our Father, etc.'

A prayer to be said after the chanting of the psalm, at or near twelve o'clock :—

'O Holy and Glorious Lord God, Whose Blessed Son Jesus Christ did about this hour of the day die upon the Cross for me and all sinners; let the return of this hour continually fill my mind with praise and thanks unto Thee for so merciful a Saviour and Redeemer. Grant that all sinful and wicked affections may die in me. Fill me with the holy, humble, and suffering spirit of my Blessed Saviour, that I may evermore dwell in Christ, and Christ in me. And when Thou comest, O Holy Jesus, to judge the quick and dead, grant that I may be one of those happy creatures to whom Thou shalt say, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you. Even so, Lord Jesus. Amen, Amen. Our Father, etc.'

A prayer after the chanting of the psalm, at three o'clock :—

'O Blessed Lord God, from Whose goodness I have received life and health and everything that I enjoy, raise my heart unto Thee that I may love and worship and adore Thy goodness in every thing that happens to me; that I may be free from murmuring and complaints, always taking everything to be for the best which Thy goodness suffers to fall upon me. Grant, my good God, that I may love all my fellow-creatures as myself; that I may be kind and tender-hearted to all people, sorry for their troubles, and glad

at every good thing that happens to them. Grant I may love everybody as my Blessed Saviour has loved me; that I may pray for them and do them all the good that I can; that I may never say an unkind word or do an unkind thing to anybody, whether friend or enemy. Grant this, O Lord, for the sake of my Blessed Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen. Our Father, etc.'

A prayer after the chanting of the psalm in the evening:—

'Blessed be Thy Holy Name, O Lord, for preserving me from all the dangers of this day. Grant that I may receive this evening, as if it were to be my last, that I may so confess and bewail my sins before Thee, as if I were never to see another day in this world. And as every day adds to the number of my sins, so let every evening add something to the truth and sincerity of my repentance. Lord, my time is a mere shadow and passeth away like a dream; and as I now see an end of this day, so shall I soon see an end of my life. Teach me, therefore, good God, so to meditate upon my latter end that the thoughts of death, resurrection, and judgment may fill my heart with true wisdom. And when the time cometh that my soul must go amongst departed spirits and my body fall into the grave, grant that I may then know and feel how happy and blessed are those dead that die in the Lord. Lord, hear my prayer through the merits of my Blessed Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen. Our Father, etc.'

A prayer on entering into the church:—

'Lord, receive me, I beseech Thee, in this Thy holy house of prayer, and grant that I may worship and pray unto Thee with as much reverence and godly fear as if I saw the heavens open, and all the angels that stand round Thy throne. Amen.'

A prayer at the end of Divine Service:—

'Blessed be Thy Holy Name, O Lord, for this opportunity of serving Thee. Grant that wherever I go I may live and walk as in Thy holy presence. Amen.'

[*Notes and Materials, etc.*, p. 436.]

PRAYERS

(FOUND IN LAW'S HANDWRITING AMONG HIS PAPERS)

I

A PRAYER OF DEEP HUMILIATION

'I will arise and go to my Father, and will say unto Him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and against Thee, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son.

'Behold me here, Lord, a poor miserable sinner, weary of myself, and afraid to look up to Thee; humbly begging to be fed with the crumbs that fall from Thy table.

'Whilst all Thy faithful servants are on this day offering to Thee the comfortable sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ, and feasting at that holy table which Thou hast ordained for the refreshment, joy, and comfort of their souls; I, unhappy wretch, full of guilt, am justly denied any share of these comforts that are common to the Christian world.

'O God, I thus judge myself that I may not be judged; I thus condemn myself that I may not be condemned.

'Sanctify, O Lord, I beseech Thee, this punishment to the benefit of my soul, that by Thy blessing it may take away my guilt, heal my sores, take out the stains, deliver me from the shame, and rescue me from the tyranny of sin.

'Oh, Lord of mercy, how miserable, how fallen, that I dare not approach that altar where is the only atonement of sin! God be merciful to me, who am such a sinner that I dare not to plead the only atonement for sin!

'O God, spare me, according to Thy mercy. Oh, spare me, and

let me live to enjoy Thy future mercy. Cut me not off in the midst of my sins, but let me live to seek and enjoy again the light of Thy countenance. Let me be again amongst Thy redeemed ones, eating and drinking at Thy table, and partaking of my full share of that atonement for the sins of the whole world.

'Oh that I were but a doorkeeper in the house of my God, that I might sit but amongst the lowest of Thy servants, that I might but eat the crumbs which fall from Thy table!

'But, O my God, I am an unclean worm, a dead dog, a stinking carcass, justly removed from that society of saints who this day kneel about Thine altar. But oh, suffer me to look toward Thy holy sanctuary; suffer my afflicted soul to long to be in the place where Thine honour dwelleth.

'Let me be blessed and sanctified, as Thou blessest those that lament in sackcloth and ashes. Reject not the sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart, and do Thou be with me in secret, though I am not fit to appear in Thy public worship.

'Extend the atonement of Thy Son's blood to me, a forlorn creature; and let not my sins utterly separate me from Thy mercy in Christ Jesus.

'O God, preserve me for times of peace and pardon, and let me live to be again alive in Christ. Raise me up, I beseech Thee, from this state or misery and penance, that I may be a child of the light and the day.

'O God, let me never see such another day as this. Let me never again be so oppressed with guilt as to run away from Thy Presence, and be forced to abstain from the society of Thy children.

'Let the dreadful punishment of this day never be out of my mind, that I may henceforth live in a state of repentance and godly fear, so as never again to fall from any comfort in Christ Jesus, but may be ready amongst thy faithful people to offer the glad sacrifice of joy and thanksgiving, and to plead the great atonement for the sins of the whole world.

'Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean. Lord, speak but the word, and Thy servant shall be cleansed.

'O Lord, I am destitute, afflicted, bound in sins, and banished from Thy Presence. I approach Thee with fear and trembling. I may not come to Thy table, but suffer me, I beseech Thee, to touch the hem of Thy Son's garment.

'O God, let this punishment fill my soul with deep humility, that, seeing myself thus separated from Thy faithful servants, and denied a share in that bread of life which is common to all Christians, I may look upon myself as the least and unworthiest of all Thy servants. That I may never dare to prefer myself to any one, or censure or despise any of my brethren, but may always humble myself with this reflection, that I have lately been forbid to shelter myself under the altar, and not suffered to hide myself amongst those holy crowds which offer to Thee the sacrifice of Thy dear Son.

'Oh, let no vain thoughts, no proud imagination of my own worth, ever enter again into my soul, but let me consider all orders of Christians who are now pleading the merits of the body and blood of Christ, as much my superiors, being admitted to the most glorious part of Thy worship, whilst I, poor sinner, am calling for Thy mercy by myself.

'But, O my God, Thou that art the God of all Thy creatures, accept of a broken and contrite heart, and be not angry with me for ever.'

II

A PRAYER FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF THE EVIL, BESTIAL, AND SERPENTINE PROPERTIES OF THE OLD ADAM, AND THE QUICKENING OF THE DIVINE SPIRIT OF THE SECOND ADAM, IN THE SOUL.

'O most holy and adorable God, be merciful unto me, I humbly beseech Thee, a poor, miserable, helpless creature; tied and bound

in chains and fetters of my own sinful tempers and passions; imprisoned in my own darkness, selfishness, earthliness, wrath, death and hell.

'Leave me not, O my God, to myself, to the disordered workings of my own corrupt nature, but look upon me according to Thy love and mercy in Christ Jesus, that mine eyes may see, my heart and spirit feel and find, Thy salvation.

'O my God, break down, I beseech Thee, all the works of the devil in my soul; break down all that pride, hypocrisy, and impurity have built up in me. Strip me of all false coverings, take from me all deceitful props; pluck up, as Thou pleasest, only pluck up all the depths and roots and branches of selfishness, self-will, self-love, self-esteem, and self-seeking, and plant in the depths and bottom of my soul a most true and real and essential humility, a most pure and perfect love of Thee; that love and humility may be united in all my thoughts and words and actions, that I may be all love of Thee, all humility before Thee.

'O Heavenly Father, touch and penetrate and shake and awaken the inmost depth and centre of my soul, that all that is within me may cry and call unto Thee. Strike the flinty rock of my heart, that the water of eternal life may spring up in it. Oh, break open the gates of the great deep in my soul, that Thy light may shine in upon me, that I may enter into Thy kingdom of light and love, and in Thy light see light.

'Oh, awaken in me all that is capable of knowing Thee, loving Thee, and adoring Thee, that I may love Thee on earth as Thou art loved in heaven; as saints and angels love Thee, for Thine own sake, because Thou art that which Thou art, because all is to be referred unto Thee.

'O Holy God of Love, help me to die to everything, both within me and without me, that hinders my living unto Thee; to die all kinds of deaths that may fit and prepare me for the life of Thy Holy Spirit in me.

'Drive, I beseech Thee, the serpent and the beast out of me, and do Thou take possession of my whole heart, soul, spirit, and body, that I may be all Thine, the stringed instrument, sound, and harmony of Thy Holy Spirit, united to all Thy harmony in heaven and earth; willing nothing but in Thy will, loving nothing but in Thy love, speaking nothing, doing nothing, but what Thy Holy Spirit speaketh and doeth in me.

'O my God and my All, draw me unto Thee, I humbly beseech Thee. Oh let me hear Thy Divine call always sounding in the depth of my soul. Fill me with such hunger and thirst and longing desire of Thee, strong and lively faith in Thee, pure and perfect love of Thee, full and absolute resignation unto Thee, as may make me capable of Thy Divine Nature, that I may eat the heavenly flesh and drink the heavenly blood of the Blessed Saviour, and dwell in Him and He in me.

'O Holy Jesus, joyful Name of Love, eternal Word and Son and Heart and Light and Life and Holy Power of God, be Thou incarnate in me; do Thou open Thyself in me, that the spirit of my soul may reach Thee, and receive Thee into it. I seek wholly unto Thee. I desire to renounce all for Thee, to live wholly unto Thee, to be nothing but in Thee, by Thee, and through Thee.

'Oh, do Thou inwardly call me as Thou calledst those who left all and followed Thee. Touch me as Thou didst those whose distempers Thou healedst; awaken me as Thou didst those whom Thou raisedst from death. O holy Son of God, be Thou my Inward Atonement, my Saviour and Deliverer. Without Thee I am only wrath and fire and darkness. Oh, let Thy divine birth arise in my soul, that I may be in Thee a new creature, quickened and revived, led and governed, by Thy Holy Spirit.

'O Eternal Father of all spirits, take the veil from off my heart; remove all that is between Thee and me, all that hinders my knowledge and love of Thee, the manifestation of Thy Divine Life, Light, Love, Spirit, Power, and Holy Presence in me.

'Take from me everything that takes me away from Thee, lead me into and through everything inwardly and outwardly, that may cleanse and purify me from my sins, that may fit and prepare me to be the temple and habitation of Thy Holy Spirit.

'Keep me, I humbly beseech Thee, always before Thee, in a state of inward, deep, continual prayer and love and adoration of Thee; looking up unto Thee in all things, looking at all things only as they are in Thee, receiving all things as from Thee, doing all things in Thee and for Thee, from a principle of pure and perfect love of Thee, in all things absolutely resigned unto Thee, everywhere and at all times worshipping and adoring Thee in spirit and in truth.'

III

A PRAYER ON ENTERING INTO HOLY ORDERS

'O Great and Holy Lord God, I am ashamed to lift up my face to Thee. For mine iniquities have increased over my head, and my trespasses are waxed great unto the heavens. Since the days of my youth I am in a great trespass, even unto this day: and I cannot stand before Thee for this.

'O God, be merciful to me, the greatest of all sinners, who have sinned against the greatest advantages of education, against the greatest blessings of Thy providence, against frequent inspirations of Thy Holy Spirit, and in despite of repeated vows and promises of amendment.

'I have not only the sins of common Christians to lament, I have not only the guilt of breaking my baptismal covenant to deplore, but the grievous, dreadful sin of abusing, defiling, and neglecting the duties of that great calling to which Thy providence hath suffered me to enter.

'O God, be not angry with me, for turning my eyes towards heaven.

'An unclean worm, a dead dog, a stinking carcass, yet presuming to minister in holy things! Lord, how oft has Thy goodness spared me! entering the holy place with impurity of heart, with vain affections, with pride and vanity, and touching the holy things with polluted hands!

'O Lord, I detest and abhor myself for all these my sins, for my abuse of Thy infinite mercy. Oh, do Thou increase this abhorrence and fill my soul with a true penitential sorrow, such sorrow as may make me capable of Thy mercy.

'Deliver me, O Father of mercy, from all blood-guiltiness; and lay not to my charge the iniquities of those whom I have injured either by my negligence or ill example.

'O Gracious Father, suffer me not to sink under this weight of sin; reach out Thy mercy to me, and through the merits and death of Thy Son Jesus Christ, receive me to pardon, to grace, and favour.

'I repent with all the powers of my soul, I return with all my heart; but, O Lord, grant me a better heart, a more pious soul, to offer unto Thee.

'O God, surely it is not in anger that Thou permittest and inclinest my mind to offer myself to a further office at Thy holy altar? Be not angry with me, O God, for presuming upon Thy Holy Spirit, for hoping that I am called by Thee to this holy office.

'O God, fit and prepare my heart, I beseech Thee, for this holy and divine employment. Cleanse and purify me from all filthiness of flesh and spirit.

'Grant me strength and power to renounce and forsake all appearances of sin, to study and practise all instances of holiness and virtue.

'O Heavenly Father, let not this heavenly office be to my condemnation. But do Thou make it a means of atoning for the guilt of former life. Make it such a state of penitence and piety

as to prepare me for Thy mercy, that my dreadful sins may be blotted out before I appear at the last tribunal.

'Receive me, I beseech Thee, O Father of mercy. Do Thou sanctify and change my heart, that I may feel and know that Thou callest me to this holy function.

'For Christ's sake blot out all my sins, deliver me from guilt, heal my sores, take out my stains, make me not an example of Thy wrath. Be not angry with me for ever, by reserving evil for me.

'Neither condemn me into the lower parts of the earth, for Thou art the God of them that repent: Thy mercy triumpheth in the salvation of sinners.

'Speak the word, therefore, gracious God, that Thy servant may be healed; look upon me through the merits of Christ, that I may rise from this death of sin and misery.

'O my God, I humbly in Thy presence renounce all my former sins: oh, help this resolution. I here offer and devote myself, and all that I have, to Thy service, desiring, hoping, and resolving to live the remainder of my days in penitence and piety: watching, praying, and labouring to save my own soul, and do all the good that I can to the souls and bodies of all my fellow-creatures.

'Thus, O Lord, repenting and renouncing my sins, I trust in Thy great mercy in Christ Jesus; I presume to offer myself to wait at Thy altar: thus repenting, I hope I shall not provoke Thy displeasure by presuming upon Thy Holy Spirit, by looking upon myself as thereby called to this sacred employment.

'Receive me, therefore, O Lord, I beseech Thee, to this sacred office. Do unto me as Thou dost unto all those whom Thy providence chooseth for this great employment.

'Send down, O Lord, Thy Holy Spirit upon me; endue me with light and wisdom from above, that my heart may be filled and strengthened with all those graces which Thou knowest to be needful for me.

'Lord, grant me a burning zeal for the salvation of souls. If it be Thy gracious will, make me instrumental in the salvation of my fellow Christians; by my advice, labour, and example, may I correct and improve their lives. And grant, gracious God, that whilst I preach unto others, I may not be a castaway myself.'—[*Notes and Materials, etc.*, p. 346.]

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